



POLISH TRADITIONAL FOLKLORE

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THE MAGIC OF TIME

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that investigation of temporal structures appropriate for various communities directly reveals entire cognitive complexes. Each culture creates its own visions of the world and man and manifests its characteristic temporal consciousness, which co-determines these visions.¹ This conviction, fundamental to understanding the essence of culture, has appeared in Polish humanities only recently,² whereas it had been well established in research conducted in other countries.³ Symbolic representation of everyday time, comprising basic operations of making the universe meaningful,⁴ belongs to such neglected areas. According to J. Tomicka and R. Tomicki, a vision of the world is reflected primarily in elements of everyday life – in incantations accompanying work, in magic formulas, proverbs, tales and folk legends, customs and rites.⁵ The present study attempts to deduce such a model from Polish traditional folklore (within the Slavic context). The nature of the material under investigation required interdisciplinary structural-semiotic analysis of standard Polish ethnographic-folkloric sources: *ZWAK*, *MAAE*, *Lud*, *DWOK*, as well as monographs based on fieldwork, and other resources principally from the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth centuries.

Interest in temporal structures, as elementary forms of articulation of the world, remains strictly in the realm of questions concerning proto-motives of human activity and existence; it connects with a search for deep semantic structures and a new strategy of integration of knowledge about man.⁶ Hence, contemporary folkloristic explorations as well as theoretical folkloristics in Poland, tend to adopt an increasingly anthropological perspective.⁷ They especially highlight the importance of human activities in creating meanings; they focus

studies on questions of symbol, myth and ritual; they regard symbolic thinking as crucial for human existence (*homo symbolicus*), revealing the deepest aspects of reality and elementary structures of human imagination.⁸

Thus, the very nature of investigated material demands a subjective stance:

Time exists objectively, but not separately. Therefore, when we speak about time, in fact we do not speak about time but about the world and man [...] Their real sense may be expounded through anthropological reduction: treating statements about time as shortened and surrogate expressions, with man as their ontological subject.⁹

E. Cassirer, too, writes about a human temporal world: he postulates a discovery of its true nature through an analysis of cultural forms.¹⁰ All behaviors of a collective subject develop in a definite “here and now” structure of reality, in a concrete situation created by certain objective interrelationships, transcendental vis-à-vis people. And such reality is relative to the natural-social mode of existence of subjects, to their way of perception of the external world.¹¹ Thus, experience of temporality compels distinct cultural patterns and norms, conscious and unconscious standards of cultural behavior – both verbal and non-verbal. It produces a kind of *supra-text*, in which the code of cosmic and existential order organizes the universe and determines the essence of social existence¹² and a metaphorical-mythological cast of mind. The quality of time units differentiates metaphors-words, metaphors-objects and metaphors-events; it supplies these metaphors with meaning, as well as with a special kind of logic, which L. Lévy-Bruhl called pre-logical thinking, based on the law of participation.¹³

Reversal of perspective – i.e. starting with time and its textual determinants – enables reconstruction of the ideological *supra-text* of the folkloric natural calendar. It renders possible an overview of mechanisms triggering off various kinds of expression, occurring especially in daily communication: in situations of solicitude and mystical situations.¹⁴ It also enables liberation from dogmatic limitations of normative aesthetics of folklore

understood as verbal art, going beyond canonical genre categorization, and inclusion of elusive forms as well as those arising from the application of the communication theory of the genre.¹⁵ This method of scientific investigation seems to appreciate fully the anthropological and humanistic character of folklore, which is argued in D. Simonides's publications.¹⁶ This is also in accordance with C. Hernas's postulate of studying folklore in terms of theory of culture, i.e. of conducting the analysis of a part (i.e. folklore) and a whole (i.e. culture) on the same level – determined by inquiry into humanistic content and patterns of living.¹⁷ Such understanding of folklore also enables to ground its manifestations on their original customary context – in agreement with the position taken by K. W. Czistow about the syncretistic nature of traditional culture and the impossibility of understanding folklore without detailed investigation of a substratum lying at its basis.¹⁸ The supra-text of folklore constitutes a specific „philosophy” of being which determines a hierarchy of particular folkloric texts. They operate on verbal, objective, actional, social, structural, genetic and functional levels. Their three intersecting strata of meaning – exegetical, operational and positional – are counterparts of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects in semiotic analysis of a cultural text.

Primordial structures of folk imagination, disclosed by an analysis of temporality, manifest the essence of the archaic phase of folk consciousness. It unites utilitarian, rational, practical and symbolic, mythological, ritualistic, irrational elements and actions into dual knowledge. A temporal perspective also supports a systemic view of diverse human activities: it correlates technological processes (real needs) with a universal mythical system to create a uniform vision of the world, a network of inseparable ideological, semantic, genetic and functional inter-relationships.¹⁹

This uniformity is evinced by the everyday scenarios analysed in the present study,²⁰ axiologically differentiated key sequences of the ordinary nocturnal-diurnal cycle. They comprise the fundamental binary opposition of general meanings of Night-

-Day (reflecting the superior polarity of darkness and light), and primarily the temporal thresholds: daybreak and nightfall. They are separated by the pair of notions connected with the central temporal phase: midday and midnight (these thresholds create a "closed-circuit" corresponding to the macrotime of the annual cycle). Such natural pattern structured the present study of temporal experience, and arranged it according to the decreasing vector: from the most general meanings – bi-dimensional structure of folk temporality (chapter I), through the Night-Day formula (chapters II and III), to detailed explication of four moments of sacred time breaking the circular continuum of nocturnal-diurnal time (chapters IV-VII). The closing section of the present study signalizes the problem of artifacts – i.e. the smallest time units derived from assimilation of external notions, elements of an alien code (chapter VIII). Assumption of an anthropocentric way of viewing the researched material brought about a shift in focus onto multi-level existential situations crystallized around the distinguished temporal phases. However, it did not preclude possibilities of re-interpretations and additions, both in terms of the assumed conception and beyond it.

NOTES

¹ A. Pawełczyńska: *Czas człowieka*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1986, p. 136.

² See for example B. Geremek: "Człowiek i czas: jedność kultury średniowiecznej," in *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X-XIII w.*, ed. J. Dowiat, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985, p. 432-82; H. Czerwińska: "Czas świąteczny w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej," *Lud*, 1984, vol. 68, p. 71-87; *Czas w kulturze*, ed. A. Nowicki, Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1983; *Czas w kulturze*, ed. and Introduction A. Zajączkowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988; M. Czerwińska: "Problematyka czasu we współczesnych badaniach literackich," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1969, no.4; *Czas, wartości, historia. Studia nad aksjologią czasu historycznego*, ed. Z. J. Czarnecki, Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1990; E. Tarkowska: *Czas w społeczeństwie. Problemy, tradycje, kierunki badań*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1987; T. Banaszczyk: *Czas jako kategoria społeczna. Wstępne rozważania socjologiczne o czasie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1981; Z. Augustynek: *Natura czasu*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1975; Z. Augus-

tynek: *Przeszłość, teraźniejszość, przyszłość. Studium filozoficzne*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979; Z. Lewicki: *Czas w prozie strumienia świadomości*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1975; A. Nowicki: *Czas i człowiek*, Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1983; Z. Poniatowski: "Czas religijny i czas świecki," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1964, no. 5, p. 51-9; W. Pawluczuk: "Czas i przeżycie religijne," *Człowiek i Światopogląd*, 1974, no. 9, p. 36-43 and others.

³ See for example *Time: A bibliography*. Compiled and edited by E. S. Krudy, B. T. Bacon, R. Turner, London: Information Retrieval, 1976; also E. Tarkowska: *op. cit.*, p. 163-84; *Man and Time. Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, selected and trans. by D. Froebe-Kapteyn, vol. 3, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957 (series XXX); *The Voices of Time. A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time by the Sciences and by Humanities*, ed. J. T. Fraser, New York: 1966; M. Frankenhäuser: *Estimation of Time. An Experimental Study*, Stockholm: 1959; G. L. Kaufman: *The Book of Time*, New York: 1938; H. J. Cowan: *Time and Its Measurement. From the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age*, Cleveland: 1958; T. H. Bell, C. Bell: *The Riddle of Time*, New York: 1964; *Time in Science and Philosophy. An International Study of Some Current Problems*, ed. J. Zeman, Amsterdam: 1971; J. R. Lucas: *A Treatise on Time and Space*, London: 1973; L. R. B. Elton, H. Messel: *Time and Man*, Oxford: 1978; J. Hinckfuss: *The Existence of Space and Time*, Oxford: 1975.

In 1966, the International Society for the Study of Time was created to integrate research in various disciplines dealing with the issue of time. It has mainly organized scientific conferences and published proceedings, see: *The Study of Time. Proceedings of the First Conference of the International Society for the Study of Time*, eds. J. T. Fraser, F. C. Herber, G. H. Müller, Berlin: 1972; *The Study of Time II. Proceedings of the Second Conference of the International Society for the Study of Time*, eds. J. T. Fraser, N. Lawrence, Berlin: 1975; *The Study of Time III. Proceedings of the Third Conference of the International Society for the Study of Time*, eds. J. T. Fraser, N. Lawrence, D. Park, Berlin: 1978. The Founder of the Society, J. T. Fraser, argued for the creation of chronosophy – a new science integrating all research into time.

⁴ W. Pawluczuk: *Wiara a codzienność*, Kraków: Miniatura, 1990, p. 9.

⁵ J. Tomicka, R. Tomicki: *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1975, p. 13.

⁶ R. Sulima: *Literatura a dialog kultur*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1988, p. 93.

⁷ See for example D. Simonides: "Nobilitacja podania wierzeniowego jako przedmiotu badań," in *Śląskie miscellanea. Literatura – folklor*, ed. D. Simonides and J. Zaremba, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980, p. 76; P. Kowalski: "Perspektywy folklorystyki antropologicznej," in P. Kowalski: *Współczesny folklor i folklorystyka. O przedmiocie poznania w dzisiejszych*

badaniach folklorystycznych, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1990, p. 100-23. On folkloristics broadly understood in terms of anthropology and semiotics of culture – R. Sulima: “Wieczność – biografia – historia (O ludowych podaniach historycznych – niefolklorystycznie),” *Literatura Ludowa*, 1989, no. 2, p. 33.

⁸ See e.g. G. Durand: *Wyobrażenia symboliczne*, trans. C. Rowiński, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986; M. Eliade: *Images and Symbols. Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. P. Mairet, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 12; A. P. Kowalski: “Mit w obrzędzie pogrzebowym,” *Lud*, 1988, p. 113; J. Fontenrose: *The Ritual Theory of Myth*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966 (Folklore Studies, no. 18); R. M. Dorson: “Theories of Myth and the Folklorist,” in *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. H. A. Murray, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, p. 76-89.

⁹ A. Nowicki: “Człowiek wobec czasu,” in *Czas w kulturze*, ed. A. Nowicki, p. 9. All quotations from Polish and other languages in the present study are translated by W. Krajka.

¹⁰ See E. Cassirer: *Esej o człowieku. Wstęp do filozofii kultury*, trans. A. Staniewska, Introduction B. Suchodolski, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1971, p. 92.

¹¹ Z. Biały: “Rytuały w procesie społecznej komunikacji,” in *Spoleczne funkcje folkloru*, Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1985, p. 10.

¹² W. Pawluczuk: *Wiara a codzienność...*, p. 9.

¹³ L. Lévy-Bruhl: *Czynności umysłowe w społeczeństwach pierwotnych*, trans. B. Szvarcman-Czarnota, Introduction E. Tarkowska, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1992, p. 20 and others.

¹⁴ These categories, derived from M. Heidegger’s philosophy, are given after I. Borowik: *Charyzma a codzienność. Studium wpływu religii na życie codzienne*, Kraków: Miniatura, 1990, p. 43, 123.

¹⁵ On proposed broadening of the scope of research in folkloristics see B. N. Putiłow, in G. Strobach: “Wwiedienije,” in *Narodnyje znanija. Folklor. Narodnoje isskusstwo*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1991, p. 13.

¹⁶ See e.g. D. Simonides: “Wspólnota. Spory z folklorem,” *Śląsk (Tak i Nie)*, 1986, no. 3, p. 16; D. Simonides: “Folklorystyka wobec etnologii i innych nauk humanistycznych,” *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Etnograficzne*, 1991, vol. 28, Etnografia wśród nauk humanistycznych, ed. C. Robotycki, p. 72.

¹⁷ C. Hernas: “Miejsce badań nad folklorem literackim,” in *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. H. Markiewicz, J. Sławiński, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976, p. 475.

¹⁸ K. W. Czistow: *Narodnyje tradycyi i folklor. Oczierki tieorii*, Leningrad: Nauka, 1986, p. 5-6.

¹⁹ On “duality of folk knowledge” see e.g. B. N. Putiłow, G. Strobach: *op. cit.*, p. 6 and others.

²⁰ See W. Pawluczuk: “Scenariusze codzienności,” *Regiony*, 1979, no. 4.

CHAPTER I

TIME AND ORDER. BI-DIMENSIONAL STRUCTURE OF FOLK TEMPORALITY

Some say that time is Fire, others – that it is the Lord of Creation (*Pradžapati*). Some represent it as a season of the year, others – as a month, a day or even a moment [...] Some say that it is an instant (*muhurta*); but what is absolutely One, has many shapes.

(*Mahabharata* XII, 224, 5-54)

According to many scientists, intensive and multi-dimensional consciousness of time could not appear until in agrarian communities. Their sense of temporality served as the basis for creation and segmentation of universal social time, festivals, rites connected with the sequence of agricultural activities, seasons of the year and times of the day, phases of growth of crops or domestic animals. Collective nature was a principal characteristic of this time (E. E. Evans-Pritchard called it structured time, reflecting interpersonal relations in a social structure).¹ This time was differentiated and measured by events of collective life connected with stages of work. Temporal conceptualization was accomplished in the course of collective struggle with nature: real human time was structured as a natural *continuum* governed by laws of physical time. Temporal anisotropy (a stream of many kinds of time) served these practices: it was the ecological time of creative growth, vegetation time, it reflected man's relation to his natural environment determined by the rhythm of his occupations. This time-flow indicated not merely a quantitative growth but also a qualitative one – blooming, ripening, etc. Thus, it was the time of life manifested through collective work, of care for the future; it was concrete

time, a common denominator of vegetative continuity. It was a sign of homogeneity of the macrocosm and the microcosm, of the inviolable symbiosis of the times of Nature, Earth (ecological time) and Man (biological time), measured by the same scale, having the same intervals. H. Ditfurth claimed that man's inherent sense of his harmony with the universe was not a mere romantic illusion of philosophers of nature, but that such harmony really exists.² Human and natural life, lasting in one monolithic act of work and consciousness, were represented in parallel terms, in profoundly spatio-temporal categories-images. Time ripened like seed in the soil, sown there together with a farmer's toil. Its flow was touchable and visible. This reified, real time, was determined by the natural order as the eternal and sole objective pattern inspiring human activity. This time was felt, immanent in human experiences as their inseparable component. It was devoid of any immobile, stable background, its motion absorbed all reality. In this temporal perspective, all astrobiological objects such as the sun, stars, the earth, etc., were cognized by man neither through individual contemplation nor through disinterested reflection, but in the collective process of work and struggle with nature. In this way man shaped his overall vision of the cosmos.

Immersion in the eternal rhythm of nature, creating unity and harmony of the universe, was governed by the principle of subordination. Successful agricultural work, equivalent to happiness, depended on performing particular actions at their appropriate time. Hesiod, in his well-known didactic poem *The Works and Days* commands people to be moderate and do everything at an appropriate time, as love of order is best for man and disorder is his mortal enemy.³ This hymn to work stipulated a way of life whose rhythm remained in unappeased harmony with the natural laws. This model had its biblical exegesis, too, expressed in the form of a poetic meditation which combined religious experiences of *The Old Testament* and the hellenic philosophy:

To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

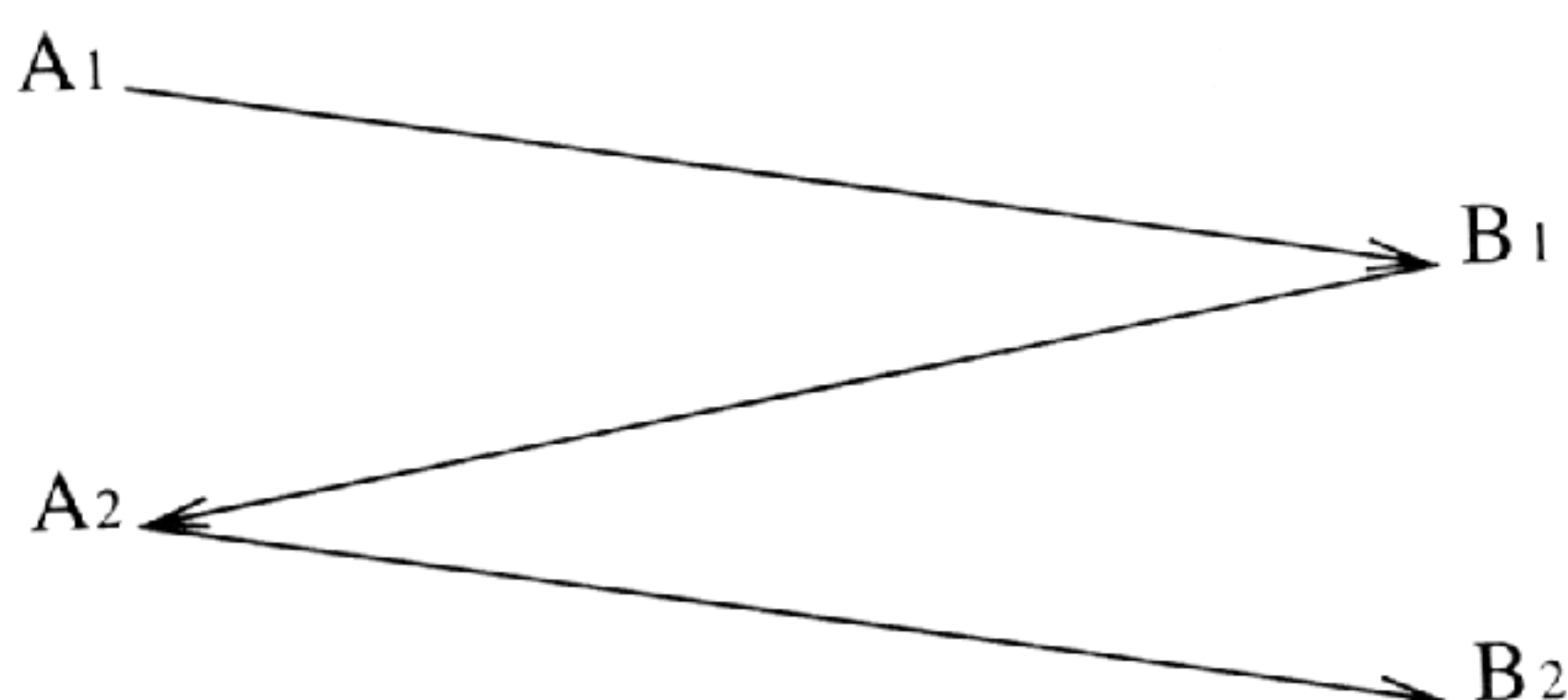
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
(Eccl 3, 1-8)

Many folkloric forms preserved both this diversity of the time scale and the cosmic unity producing universal harmony. They also preserved authentic logic of primitive archetypal combinations and images.

Cosmicization of the circular time, subordination of earthly matters to the universal order were determined principally by the solar cycle, but also by the lunar cycle. The natural cycles were imposed on man as his main temporal standards. The fundamental units of human time comprised the year (the interval of the complete rotation of the sun, of the annual cycle), the month (the interval between two conjunctions of the moon and the sun) and the day (the interval between appearance and disappearance of the sun in two different points of the horizon). In structural terms they were monolithic: the relationship of the comic cycle to the year reflected that of the year to the month and the day. Each of these forms of time realized the universal cyclicism of creation (being) and return to chaos (destruction). Observation of the heavenly bodies, and especially of the time embodied in the daily movement of the sun, formed the foundations for defining its recurring cyclicism, for experiencing its changeability; as always the final phase was simultaneously the initial one. This temporal process may be illustrated as a homogeneous zigzag:⁴



This time was not rectilinear: it was either static or reversible. It was self-contained time ("a day succeeds a night, a night succeeds a day in an eternal sequence" – Nkp 1, 536, 17), circular (*kyklos* means a circle), returning incessantly to its starting point according to the eternal cyclicism (the earth's annual rotation round the sun and daily rotation round its axis). This cyclicism consisted in perpetual creation (*creatio continua*) and de-creation of reality, repeated according to the timeless law established *in illo tempore* and resultant patterns of change. Cyclical phenomena consist in the circulation of times (*circuitus temporum*, according to St. Augustine), which brings about constant regeneration of reality. The periodical creation and de-creation of the world continually reveals what already passed and is to become again.⁵ This process is highlighted by the vision of self-contained time according to Ecclesiastes:

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

[...]

The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done; and *there is no new thing* under the sun.

(Eccl 1, 5-9)

This never-ending sequence was also expressed metaphorically in the following folk riddle: "there are two buckets poised in the well – when one goes up, the other goes down; this process repeats constantly" [day and night] (Folf Pzl 180, 764).

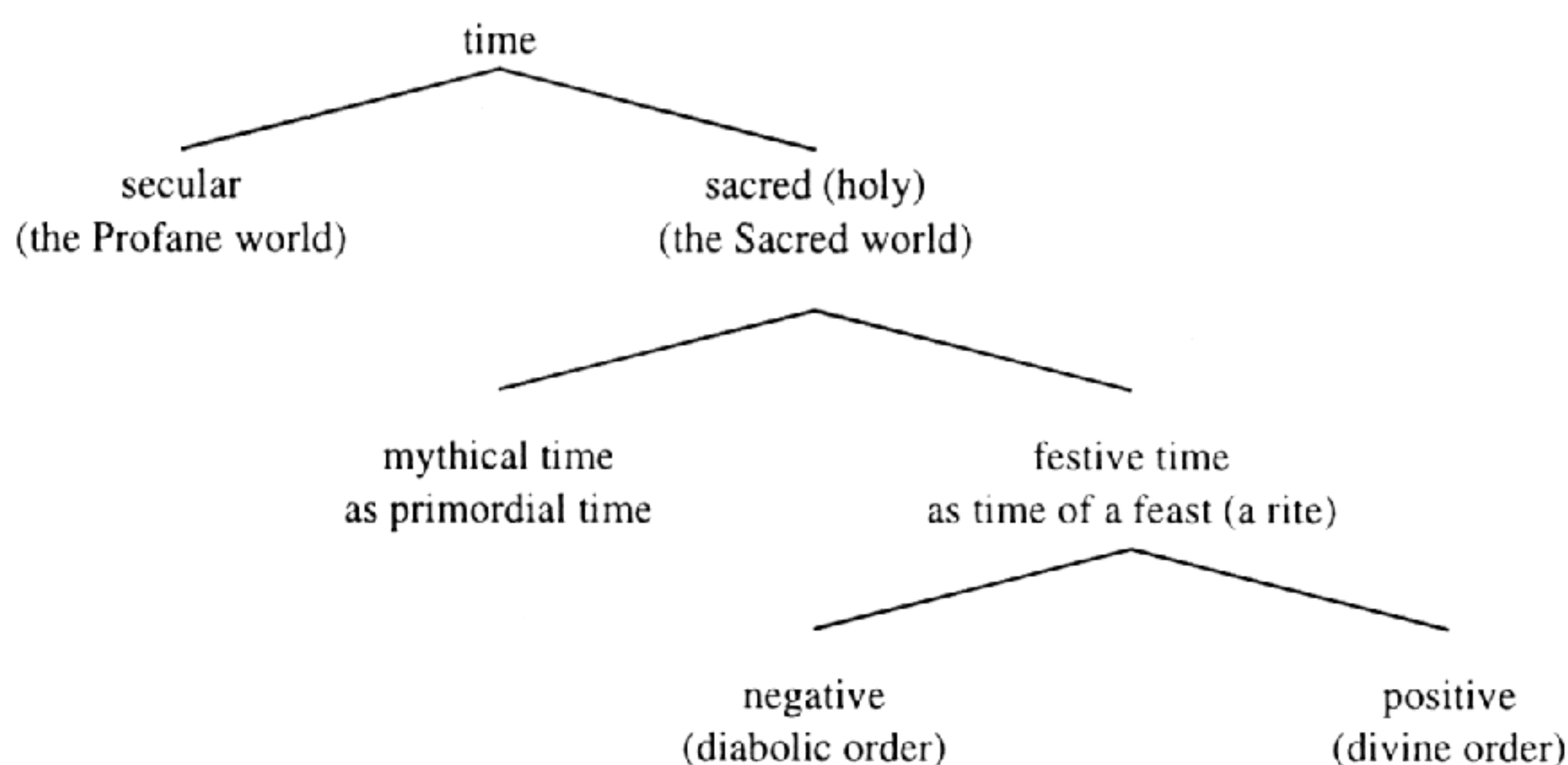
These recurrences were also reflected in representations of the circular time in terms of dichotomous, endlessly repeated reversals, observed in nature. This pendulum time unites mythological contraries – the flow of time as continual motion of a spindle between two extreme positions. E. Leach asserts the conception of time based on a succession of changes and interruptions belongs to the most elementary, primeval ways of metaphorical representation of time.⁶ Archaic, cosmocentric time orientation constituted the fundamental element of folk temporal consciousness: it codified order through duration and recurrence, rhythm and speed (the regular movement of the heavenly bodies as a manifestation of the cosmic harmony), and through co-ordination of these qualities. Man's physiological-functional rhythm, conditioning his life, was being adapted to the superior physical rhythm. Temporal adjustment of man's behavior to this cyclicism sanctioned the universal harmony, but also his dependence upon natural forces determined anisotropy of time. In archaic mentality, each dimension, each interval of time (and space) had its specific value, which in turn regulated human actions – unlike in contemporary European philosophy dominated by the conception of time as a homogeneous medium analogous to empty space.⁷

Folk axiology distinguished two principal qualities of time: favorable (happy) and unfavorable (unhappy). This distinction reflected the causal relationship between reality and occult forces conditioning it, with particular periods and points of time defined through manifestations of mystical forces. The fate of a human being (integrated with nature) was governed by supernatural forces, taking the shape of either deities or mysterious and elusive creatures. Man attempted to cognize time through comprehending its qualitative and cyclic aspects and meanings coded in them. He also endeavored to familiarize himself with the domineering character of natural time ("Time

is the Lord of this world" – Nkp 1, 355, 16) by adapting the rhythm of his life to it.

In preserved forms of traditional culture the archaic idea of self-contained time relates to the open, linear conception of time introduced by Christianity. The linear time forms not a circle but a vector, a straight line, with two extremes: the beginning (divine creation) and the end (destruction of the earthly world, the vision of the Apocalypse). The entire history of humanity, governed by God, takes place between these two polarities. This understanding of time reveals a vision of the world totally different from the cyclical one, subordinated to the notion of reversible time. Christianity created organically continuous time, established a strong connection of the present with the past and the future (the circular time grouped all these elements as if on one level, making them in a sense simultaneous⁸), and placed man in the centre of the universe (anthropocentric conception of religion). Christianity viewed time as part of eternity, comprising the drama of Incarnation and Doomsday. This makes time not a continuum of changes, but the presence belonging to and leading to God.⁹ In the realm of folk culture the fusion of natural time and Christian time (of the Judeo-Christian religion) inherent in myth, resulted in the separation of ordinary secular duration and the sacred time (superior to it). These moments of sacred time broke the continuum of circular time: they determined its movement and recreated life through the mythical history of Christ combined with the pagan solar myth regulating the rhythm of perpetually regenerating and dying nature. This cult was structured according to the rhythm of the annual renewal of the world: in its periodical recurrences man sought contact with the supernatural world. Thus the myth (the ritual equals the myth in action) united contrary, though not incompatible, conceptions of time: irreversible and reversible;¹⁰ it associated great feasts of the Christian calendar with the crucial moments in the natural cycle. The festive rhythm of Christian liturgy was in harmony with the structural basis of pre-Christian rites.¹¹ The amalgamated natural and ecclesiastical rhythms not only defined the ritualistic scenario, but also codified qualities of

time.¹² Thus, the Christian doctrine provided the conceptual framework (through continual actualization of principles of faith), in which the secular time was subordinated to the festive time – the attribute of God. Let us present this dichotomy by means of the diagram given by H. Czerwińska:¹³



The dichotomous structure of time comprised two strata: the real (day-to-day) and the symbolic (festive). They organized symbols of the religious system into the periodicity¹⁴ of activity and rest, as two fundamental phases in the rhythm of man and nature. Passage from one to the other was made possible by the vehicular function of the ritual, creating No Time. The day-to-day realm was regulated by the rhythm of activity and rest; it was the time of “works and days.” During particular seasons of the year it was different and flowed at a different speed: slower in winter, more dynamically in summer (as well as in smaller time units). However, its meaning was always the same: instrumentality of aims and actions, and the situation of solicitude connected with satisfying basic needs.¹⁵ All forms of human psychosocial expression were subordinated to this aim, which was possible to accomplish through following certain rules of conduct, derived from the relationship between man and the cosmos as represented in folk ontology. In folk culture of the XIXth century (uniting pre-Christian, Slavic and Christian cultural systems, attitudes and values) it assumed the form of the

triad: the man – the cosmos – God. Man has always attempted to give a spiritual, religious or mythological sanction to his actions. The time of agricultural work, conditioned by natural rhythms and religious practices, constituted his basic system of reference.

The sequence of ordinary, daily activities belonged, then, to the time of eternal life, motion – to the real time, governed by reason, organized by man. It was placed within the framework of *dies artificialis* – i.e. the time from sunrise to sunset – which was the “divine measure” for those working in the fields.¹⁶ As work was given by God, it belonged to man’s obligations, to the established order of divine laws. Timeless natural laws determined the everyday rhythm of his activity and passivity, formulated in the simple principle of conduct: “sleep at night, work during the day” (Nkp 1, 536, 11). It was the familiar time, the time of light, as agricultural work could be done only during the day – night work was regarded as heresy, as violation of the rhythm of nature, of the perpetual human and cosmic order. Each deviation from this rhythm was dangerous as a manifestation of abnormality: it denoted disorder, decomposition, death, chaos, disharmony, cacophony.¹⁷ This model of *tempus faber* takes the shape of logical axes, defining simple contrary structures of pansymbolic functions:

time of work – day – light – familiar space – life

time of non-work – night – darkness – non-familiar space – death.

The natural rhythm defined stable segmentation of time: its phases functioned as temporal indications of man’s daily activity: 1) early dawn, 2) dawn, 3) sunrise, 4) breakfast time, 5) forenoon, 6) the time of bringing cattle home for noontime, 7) noon, 8) early afternoon, 9) after dinner, 10) afternoon, 11) early evening, 12) sunset (Kolb 8, 298).

The repetitive rhythm of life (natural and human) demanded permanent sacrifices which were meant to regenerate and order time. Thus, the need for periodical re-actualization of scenarios of the re-creation of life, re-actualization of the mythical archetype, the need for periodical repetition of the act of creation, i.e. of maintaining universal harmony, was the under-

lying principle of the sacred time which formed a fundamental component of folk temporal consciousness. It was the time of man's activity in the sphere of non-work, the time of reflection, the festive time, the time of creation of a new world, of bonds (positive rituals) and barriers among people (negative rituals). This time may be represented as a spiral, crossing in many points the line of ordinary time, placed inside it.¹⁸ In some periods, the flow of rectilinear ordinary time got "disturbed" – such irregularities denoted the introduction of extraordinary time. They may also be pictured as special temporal "furrows,"¹⁹ incisions on the circle of eternal recurrence (and not moments providing the time-flow with a historical structure),²⁰ as intervals of sanctified time,²¹ a halting of the time pendulum between two temporal intervals.²² This circular time was not always connected with festive periods expressed by the natural rhythm and the biological cycle of human life. Entrance of extraordinary time was also joined to less meaningful events, though still significant for a traditional society: e.g. concluding and initiating important enterprises, daily restitution of light and falling of twilight. All instances of this time were filled with ritualized content. Extraordinary time appears in numerous manifestations of man's verbal and non-verbal activity: especially in rites taking place in life-crises in which symbols of death and rebirth created patterns of transition to a new existence.²³ They were situated between birth rites (evoking the time of pre-existence) and funerary rites (defining the time of post-existence). The funerary time particularly (represented symbolically by well-known metonymies of death projecting new quality of time: curtaining mirrors, tumbling down utensils, ritualistic breaking of dishes) opened a perspective for the mythical time: after the completion of the mortuary ritual the dead person passed to the Other World, to the sphere of myth. Therefore, people referred to the dead in every festive situation, in every passage to extraordinary time. However, a transfer from life to the After Life always required rituals of de-creation.²⁴

All the features which J. Huizinga²⁵ and R. Caillois²⁶ attributed to plays and games, are inherent in the festive time

(clearly distinct from human ordinary time). It was repetitive time. Participation in rites was voluntary, but motivated by dictates of etiquette – departure from it was dangerous, disturbed the natural rhythm, and led to death. A need for mythical order, for re-creation of the world was reflected for example in the imperative to celebrate Sunday (*dies dominica*) derived from Genesis.²⁷ B. Geremek claims that the development of Christianity did not implant deeply in human minds the prohibition of work on Sunday: this was a very popular motif even in sermons of the Late Middle Ages.²⁸ In traditional mentality, rational premises (e.g. symptoms of approaching unfavorable weather) frequently categorized time and its utilization. This has survived until nowadays in the approval of work during a festal day in time of harvest. Folkloric texts conveying the idea of divine punishment for this transgression are of exemplary provenance: e.g. “on Sunday morning *Kuba* was raking up hay, for which God punished him with death” (Kolb 12, 599; see also the folk beliefs recorded in the tale in *ZWAK* 115, 276).

This prohibition also applied to Saturday night, documenting the custom of counting time by nights. For example, in the cautionary tale entitled *Strach w Welnie* an evil spirit attacked the fishermen who intended to fish on Saturday night (*Wisła* 8, 734, 17).

Extraordinary time was characterized by divination practised in the time appropriate for ghosts, conveying symbolic implications concerning the future. This divination was performed in mediating stages of the night-day cycle, privileged and appropriate for this end: nights, evenings and dawns; solstices; the full moon; eves of festal days; ill-fated days. The entrance of extraordinary time was a signal for the re-creation of the human order. Configurations of life symbols recurred on festive days in rituals following their own scenarios, departing from the ordinary rhythm of night and day. They were contrary to signs of de-creation of life appearing in the festive time. Both these codes included ambivalent purification symbols of water and fire: ritualistic baths referring to the cosmogonic myth, evening lighting of the hearth, or ritual fires on special days. On the

stratum of cosmogony they denoted creation, evocation of forms and boundaries, as opposed to darkness signifying chaos, shapelessness, amalgamation of all objects.

Caillois's theory of feast as a paroxysm purifying and regenerating society²⁹ foreshadowed the later theories of M. Eliade. Both of them originated in the tradition of French sociology, and especially in the conceptions and activities of E. Durkheim. Perpetual recurrence of life in nature inspired man with a hope of rebirth of each dying life under conducive circumstances (the continual rising and setting of the sun served as an archetypal pattern expressing immortality). The process of wasting away comprised prospective regeneration. It was only necessary to create appropriate conditions for transition from one form of being to another and from one temporal stratum to another (merging of the irreversible and reversible times). This produced a feast: repetition of the cosmogonic act – conventional, not always realized by man. According to M. Bakhtin, a definite conception of the natural (cosmogonic), biological and historical time always lies at the foundations of a festal day.³⁰ It consists in renewal of the time of Chaos, No Time, supra-time, timeless vacuum, the eternal present³¹ – the third dimension of temporality, enabling, owing to ritual, a passage from the Profane order of everyday existence through the Sacred order of eternal beginnings to the restored ordinary time of life. Liberation from time might be achieved not only through recitation of myth, but especially through ritualistic repetition of sacralized action outlined in myth. Through participation in ritual, man transgressed the human condition: he abandoned the chronological time and entered the sacred time, the time of the beginnings,³² the heavenly time,³³ the time of the Other World. This entailed negation of universal laws (the world turned upside down, human existence subordinated to a different kind of rhythm³⁴). Thus, the creation of the universe took place in No Time: the festal chaos was to give birth to a new Cosmos, ordered according to human norms, i.e. dictates and prohibitions contrary to the Chaos.

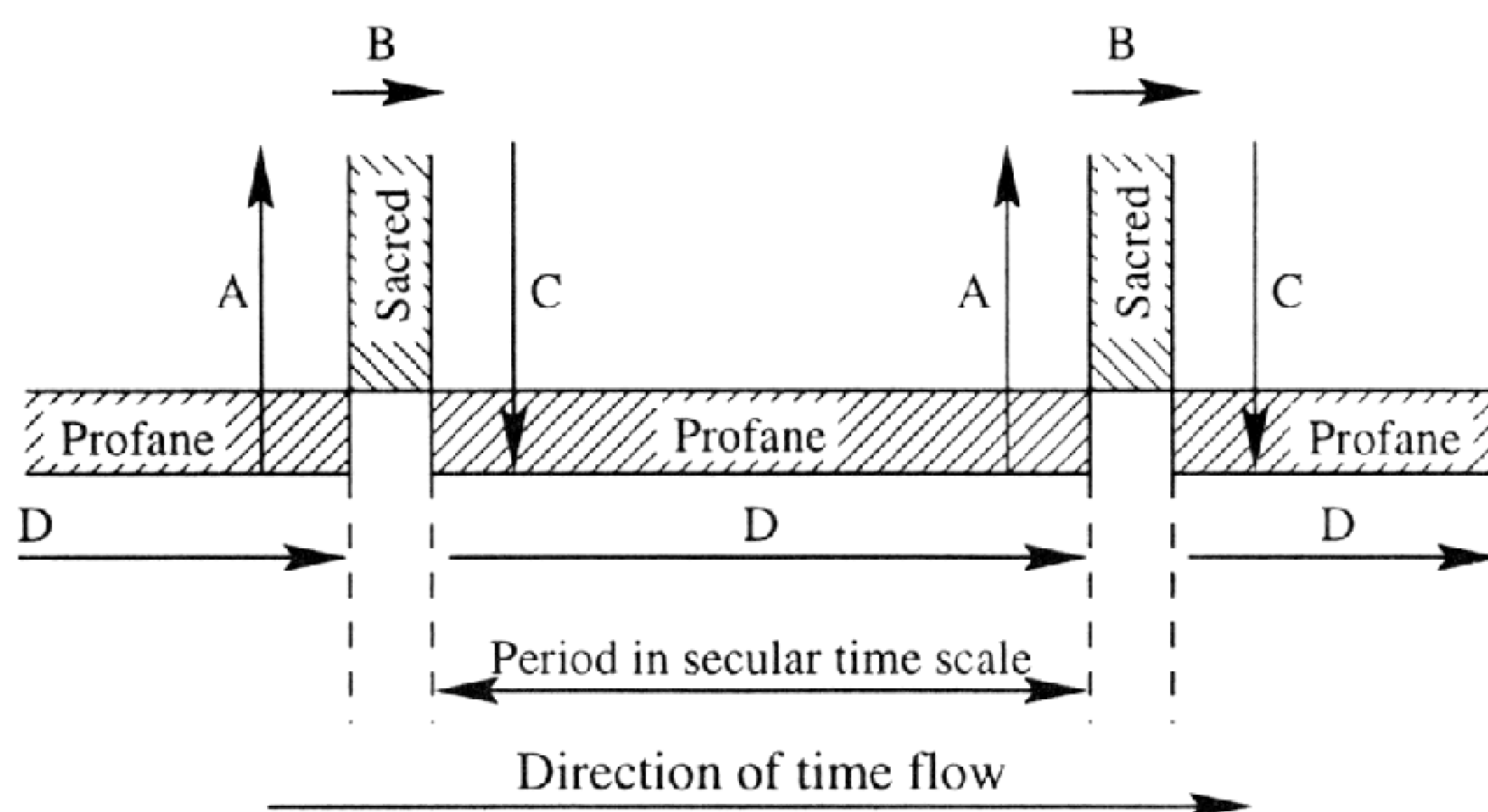
Thus, the festive time comprised both creation and de-creation,

the end and the beginning, as death and rebirth, transformation and regeneration always played a crucial role in the festal outlook. Bakhtin identified this function in the carnival – the feast of time, of becoming and growth, of change and renewal, the stage of death and rebirth.³⁵ Play, like feast, gave evidence of relationships between ordinary and extraordinary time. However, the time of play was situated between the times of work and non-work: it could lead to a feast, but could as well be merely its sign, not element. Thus, feast and play formed a structural link and a boundary between two spheres of existence: reality and non-reality. In traditional culture they constituted the focus of the ideology of eternal duration and recurrence. Thus, *tempus ludens* was superhuman time. It pointed to the sphere of the sacred, but embodied it in various degrees: from mere traces of entrance of the chaos to its full dominance.

The festive time and space, as categories ordering reality, were most fully developed in M. Eliade's theory. His position of pan-sacrality procured the understanding of time as sacred history initiated in the absolute beginning.³⁶ Cyclical repetition of cosmogony and symbolic participation of people in it clearly separated the sacred, primordial, festive mythical proto-time (especially that of annual feasts) from the secular time of ordinary duration. Thus, time was discontinuous: it comprised moments of strong, dense time, as well as of weak, thin time. The vehicular function of the ritual enabled a religious man to safely pass from ordinary duration to the sacred time. This action consisted in the repetition of the archetypal gesture, in immersion in the sacred non-historical time, in reproduction of the rite which took place in primordial time, *in illo tempore*, in the time of creation and ordering of the Cosmos, the time of revelation of proto-patterns of all human activity by gods, ancestors or cultural heroes.³⁷

Rites of passage primarily related great feasts of the Christian calendar to turning points in the flow of natural time, in the solar cycle (connected with the Slavic cosmogonic myth): the winter (21 or 22 December) and the summer (24 June) solstices, the spring (21 March) and the autumn (23 September) equinoxes.³⁸

However, transition from one cosmic or social order to another was not automatic: it required magic or ritual safeguards. Comprehension of this segmentation of space-time enabled A. van Gennep (1873-1957) to formulate his theory of *rites de passage* at the beginning of this century (*Les Rites de Passage*, Paris: 1909). It was later reinterpreted and refined by M. Gluckman, R. Hoston, V. W. Turner, E. Leach and others.³⁹ Its tripartite structure comprised: 1) rites of separation from a former state (pre-liminal rites); 2) threshold rites (transition rites, liminal rites); 3) rites of incorporation, aggregation to a new state (post-liminal rites).⁴⁰ All various barriers crossed in the course of rites of passage (seasons of the year, times of a month, a day; birth, youth, puberty, old age, death, life after death) conform to the above pattern. It also embodies the structure of festive time and its recurrence. According to Leach,⁴¹ this cyclicism is demarcated by a succession of festal days. Each feast represents temporal passage from the Normal-Profane order of existence to the Abnormal-Sacred order of existence, and back again (in Durkheim's categories). This rule may be illustrated by the following diagram:⁴²



This structure of time was created by man, by a society participating in rituals (rituals, especially sacrificial ones, bring about the cyclical change of an individual's status: from the realm of the Profane to the realm of the Sacred). The above scheme reflects four different states of a human being:

phase A: the rite of sacralization, separation – the state of symbolic death;

phase B: the marginal, liminal state – an individual is in a state of sacralization, suspended vivacity, ordinary social time comes to a standstill;

phase C: the ritual of desacralization, aggregation – an individual gets transferred back from the Sacred order of existence to the Profane order of existence, is reborn; the secular time again begins to flow;

phase D: the time-interval between consecutive feasts, the normal secular life.

Thus, symbolic death (purification) constitutes a passage to symbolic rebirth in a new state. Phase B denotes No Time with the ritualistic performance appropriate for it: life turned topsy-turvy. Leach distinguishes three basic kinds of this performance: formality, masquerade, role reversal. He also asserts that formality and masquerade form a pair of opposites: in terms of the above diagram, representing Durkheim's conception of the structure of ritual, they correspond to the contrast between phases A and C. And role reversal corresponds to phase B, in which the ordinary time is brought to a standstill, the festive time flows backward, and death gets transformed into rebirth.⁴³

L. Stomma's version of the theory of *rites de passage* distinguishes determinants of these ritual performances: 1) the magic of Alkmena + (of opening, unbinding) and the magic of Alkmena – (of closing, binding), 2) the ritualistic-magical practices on borders, 3) the appearance of demons. The magic of closing or binding appears in situations which aim at the preservation of a status quo, whereas the magic of opening or unbinding takes place in situations aiming at change. The magic of Alkmena + usually precedes significant family rites, whereas the magic of Alkmena – concludes them (except for malicious attempts at violation of the natural course of events).⁴⁴ It follows from this definition that practices of the magic of Alkmena are intended to produce a time gap – the time of passage (*temps de passage*), which comprises magico-religious performances enabling transition from one state to another. In

the Polish folk calendar it pertained to the afore-mentioned four fundamental moments of the solar cycle (the summer and winter solstices and the spring and autumn equinoxes), combined with the annual liturgical segmentation of the Christian, sacramental time: God's Feasts (*Proprium de tempore*) and the parallel cycle of celebrations of Saints: the Virgin Mary, Angels and Saints (*Proprium Sanctorum*).⁴⁵ This time of passage also applied to the four basic points of the night-day cycle – daybreak, midday, twilight, midnight – which also possessed their inherent magic power (the symbolism of mediating elements: the boundary and the center). The present study focusses on their symbolic representation in the Polish folk tradition, on a peculiar outlook underlying folk perception of everyday time – as a periodical, dynamic sequence (“time does not stand” – Nkp 1, 356, 23; “time flows like water in a watermill” – Nkp 1, 357, 28), structured into the Profane time and the Sacred time.

The intentional nature of symbolic time⁴⁶ was indicated by the general practice of combining great units of time (moments of passage in the annual cycle) with small ones (border moments of the night-day cycle), which increased their power. The symbolic time organized not only symbols of the religious system but also of the pre-Christian, magical system. It was marked as a clear interruption in the flow of the secular time and the entrance of the magico-religious time which was an opening to the eternal presence. According to M. Eliade, in a few seconds the Heaven opens and magic herbs (e.g. fern) acquire extraordinary properties. Anyone who picks them at such a moment may become invisible, immune against wounds, etc. Such hierophanic seconds recur annually: they may be imagined as a “window” which rapidly opens onto Great Time, and simultaneously enables this paradoxical second of magico-religious time to become included in secular duration.⁴⁷

The intensification of temporal border phases through combining them with spatial boundaries (see Kolb 7, 41) was also characteristic of folk imagination. In terms of the theory of *rites de passage* – *temps de passage*, their ambivalent nature was dominated by either positive or negative elements, depending on

the quality of the temporal phase in question. It was the all-embracing time which determined norms, ordered reality, and gave sense to human actions.

Apart from the solar orientation, the cyclical lunar orientation provided periods of time with quality (especially evaluation of days of the week): it was contained within the paradigm of death and renewal of life. Thus, both these types of cycles created the image of rhythmical recurrence. The phases of the moon had an impact upon both practical and magic actions.⁴⁸ According to K. Moszyński, celebrations of the new moon and the full moon constituted the primordial source of the week period of work and celebration of Sunday; and the name "Saturday," used for many thousands of years, denoted originally the day of the full moon.⁴⁹ Ritual performances especially (e.g. formulas of contagion) vis-à-vis the new moon were meant to highlight their pragmatic intention through the pious starting of a new period,⁵⁰ ensuring wealth and happiness for it.

Man's dependence on time (defined by natural rhythms, with moments of the extraordinary, sacred time interrupting the continuum of ordinary time) pointed to the archaic representation of time as a category uniting mythological contraries, originating in the dualistic classification of reality. Hence the ambivalent nature of time. Its extraordinary, creative phase generated everyday reality, on both cosmic and social levels, as universal harmony consisted in the proper combination of opposites and in keeping them balanced. A human being, living in symbiosis with nature, was entirely dependent upon the Cosmocrator's will, subordinated to Him and to the rules imposed by Him. Thus, ritualistic performance comprised also endeavors to secure the power (*orenda*) and protection of the supernatural force through actualization of cardinal articles of faith and through union with deceased ancestors (a peculiar actualization of family genealogy).⁵¹ Mystical situations, both in the night-day mini-cycle and the festive periods in the annual cycle, secured order (safe duration: continuity of social life and a sense of its stability). Aspiration for its restitution lay at the basis of human dreams and musing upon ritualistic victory of life

over death. Hence the necessity of permanent sacralization of the Profane time (the time of man and his actions), of cosmicization of life space and ordinary temporal duration. This cosmicization liberates man from existence in chaos by re-creation of the Sacred history, of the myth underlying all human behaviors.

NOTES

¹ See E. E. Evans-Pritchard: "Nuer Time-Reckoning," *Africa* (Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures), vol. XII, April 1939, no. 2, p. 189-90.

² H. Ditfurth: *Na początku był wodór*, trans. A. D. Tauszyńska, Introduction M. Iłowiecki, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978, p. 241.

³ Hezjod [Hesiod]: *Prace i dni*, trans. W. Steffen, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952; see D. Dembińska-Siury: "Ideal rolnika," in D. Dembińska-Siury: *Człowiek odkrywa człowieka. O początkach greckiej refleksji moralnej*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1991, p. 55.

⁴ E. R. Leach: "Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time," in E. R. Leach: *Rethinking Anthropology*, London: University of London – The Athlone Press, 1961, p. 131 (London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, no. 22).

⁵ W. Koppers: "Krażenie czasów," in *Etnologia*, selected and ed. Z. Sokolewicz, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969, p. 309.

⁶ See E. R. Leach: *op. cit.*, p. 131-4.

⁷ R. B. Onians: "Time," in R. B. Onians: *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951, p. 411.

⁸ See A. J. Guriewicz: "Wriemja kak problema istorii kultury," *Woprosy Filosofii*, 1969, no. 3, p. 107.

⁹ See B. Geremek: "Człowiek i czas: jedność kultury średniowiecznej," in *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X-XIII w.*, ed. J. Dowiat, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985, p. 433.

¹⁰ J. Saliba: "*Homo Religiosus*" in *Mircea Eliade. An Anthropological Evaluation*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976, p. 130 (Dissertationes ad Historiam Religionum Pertinentes, vol. 5).

¹¹ G. Dumézil: *La religion romaine archaïque*, Paris: 1966, p. 329; see B. Geremek: *op. cit.*, p. 461.

¹² H. Hubert, M. Mauss: *Mélanges d'histoires religieuses*, Paris: 1928, p. 228 and following.

¹³ H. Czerwińska: "Czas świąteczny w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej," *Lud*, 1984, vol. 68, p. 76.

¹⁴ D. Zadra: "Symbolic Time," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, vol. 14, New York: MacMillan, 1987, p. 193.

¹⁵ In Heideggerian philosophical penetration of the deepest foundations of everyday existence "care" belongs to key notions – it is "the being of being." It acquires its ontological sense through temporality, which ensures unity of existence. Investigation of the temporal dimension of everyday existence reveals sources of understanding of time: see M. Heidegger: *Bycie i czas*, trans. and Introduction B. Baran, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1994; also I. Borowik: *Charyzma a codzienność. Studium wpływu religii na życie codzienne*, Kraków: Miniatura, 1990, p. 39.

¹⁶ Z. Gloger – badacz przeszłości ziemi ojczystej. *Materiały z sesji popularnonaukowej*, ed. J. Babicz and A. Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa, Warszawa: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1979, p. 160. Work wins God's approval – on theology of work see A. Guriewicz: *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, trans. J. Dancygier, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976, p. 271-2.

¹⁷ W. Bielów: "Okrągły rok i koło życia," *Regiony*, 1984, no. 2, p. 60.

¹⁸ A. Zadrożyńska: *Homo faber i homo ludens. Etnologiczny szkic o pracy w kulturze tradycyjnej i współczesnej*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983, p. 203.

¹⁹ See M. Bachtin [Bakhtin]: "Czas i przestrzeń w powieści," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1974, no. 4, p. 294; M. Bachtin [Bakhtin]: "Ludowe źródła czasoprzestrzeni Rabelais'go," *Regiony*, 1979, no. 1, p. 41-54.

²⁰ A. Guriewicz: *Problemy średniowiecznej kultury ludowej*, trans. Z. Dobrzyniecki, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1987, p. 163.

²¹ M. Eliade: *Sacrum, mit, historia*, selection M. Czerwiński, Introduction B. Moliński, trans. A. Tatarkiewicz, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970, p. 97; M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii*, trans. J. Wierusz-Kowalski, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1966, p. 387.

²² E. Leach: *op. cit.*, p. 133.

²³ M. Eliade: "L'initiation et le monde moderne," in *Initiation. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions*, ed. C. J. Bleeker, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965, p. 1-14.

²⁴ See C. J. Bleeker: "Some Introductory Remarks on the Significance of Initiation," in *Initiation....*, p. 20.

²⁵ J. Huizinga: *Homo ludens. Zabawa jako źródło kultury*, trans. M. Kurecka and W. Wirpsza, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1985.

²⁶ R. Caillois: *Żywiol i ład*, selection A. Osęka, Introduction M. Porębski, trans. A. Tatarkiewicz, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973 (chapter: "Ludzie a gry i zabawy" [People and games]).

²⁷ "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he

had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen 2, 2-3). Sunday was not recognized as a festal day, a day of rest from work, until the IVth century after Christ, when the Emperor Constantine combined two feasts: Sabbath and Sunday. This made Sunday to appropriate all the characteristics of Sabbath: it became not only the day of the Pasch but also a day free from work, of spiritual rest. Pope Leo's XIII encyclical *Rerum novarum* ordered to observe Sunday: see J. Wierusz-Kowalski: *Liturgika*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1956, p. 168.

²⁸ B. Geremek: *op. cit.*, p. 455.

²⁹ R. Caillois: *op. cit.*, p. 157.

³⁰ M. Bachtin [Bakhtin]: *Dialog. Język. Literatura*, ed. E. Czaplewicz, E. Kasperski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983, p. 147-8.

³¹ A. Pawełczyńska: *Czas człowieka*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1986, p. 21.

³² J. Saliba: *op. cit.*, p. 53.

³³ See S. de Grazia: *Of Time, Work and Leisure*, New York: 1962, p. 322.

³⁴ See M. Maliński: "Święta świeckie i religijne," *Znak*, 1975, no. 9, p. 153.

³⁵ See M. Bachtin [Bakhtin]: *Twórczość Franciszka Rabelais'go a kultura ludowa średniowiecza i renesansu*, ed. and Introduction S. Balbus, trans. A. Goreń and A. Goreń, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1975, p. 59-77.

³⁶ See e.g. M. Eliade: *Myth and Reality*, trans. W. R. Trask, New York: Harper and Row, 1963; M. Eliade: "Myth – Sacred History, Time and Intercommunication," in *Myths, Rites, Symbols. A Mircea Eliade Reader*, ed. W. C. Beare, W. G. Doty, vols. 1-2, New York: Harper and Row, 1975, p. 1-12.

³⁷ M. Eliade: *Sacrum, mit, historia...*, p. 97-8.

³⁸ See also H. Czerwińska: *op. cit.*, p. 71-87.

³⁹ See M. Gluckman: "Les rites de passage," in *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, ed. M. Gluckman, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962, p. 1-52; V. W. Turner: *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-structure*, Chicago: Aloline, 1969; V. W. Turner: "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in V. W. Turner: *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 93-111; E. Leach: *Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols are Connected*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; E. Leach: *Social Anthropology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

⁴⁰ See A. van Gennep: *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom, G. L. Caffee, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 166.

⁴¹ E. Leach: "Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time..." p. 134.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 134-6.

⁴⁴ L. Stomma: "Mit Alkmeny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 99-110.

⁴⁵ See J. Wierusz-Kowalski: *op. cit.*, p. 164-80.

⁴⁶ See D. Zadra: *op. cit.*, p. 193.

⁴⁷ M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii...*, p. 385.

⁴⁸ K. Moszyński: *Kultura ludowa Słowian*, vol. 2 part 1, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1967, p. 457-60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

⁵¹ B. Geremek: "Człowiek i czas:...", p. 462.

CHAPTER II

THE COSMOGONIC MYTH AND THE FOLKLORIC OPPOSITION OF NIGHT-DAY

Both the white day and the dark night
know their time
(J. Kochanowski: *Czego chcesz od nas Panie*)

The dialectic of night and day constitutes the basis of human existence. Man perceives and interprets the world in terms of a set of categories which guarantee the success of his actions and create the most profound level of his life. The cosmogonic myth about separation of light from darkness, about creation of day and night, performs the function of such symbolic universe of regulating and sanctioning nature. This myth provides the assumptions of semantics of registered symbolic actions,¹ the logical model for resolving contradictions² manifest in folkloric texts-behaviors which are key forms of psychosocial expression.³ This interpretative essence of myth derives from its nature of a secondary modelling system which produces its own system of designates, notions and values: not as a copy but as a model of the world.⁴ As such, it interprets, orders, organizes and creates the reality surrounding man. The cosmogonic myth also constitutes a kind of language which communicates a definite vision of the universe. As a secondary modelling system it is a complex composition: it is created through superimposing a number of interrelated structures (religious, ideological, magical, ethical, social, etc.) on the natural language. This conglomerate of sign systems comprises many strata: from the micro-sphere of *anthropos* to the macro-sphere of cosmos. Its meanings arise

from mutual internal coding of these sign systems, as well as their external coding with systems situated outside the myth. In the case of the nocturnal-diurnal cycle crucial significance should be attributed to semantic systems crystallized around the opposite concepts of night and day: they may be represented as two sign systems co-creating the fundamental myth (of the origins). This perspective also determines the exegetical-operational nature of the research.

The symbolism of alternation of night and day, as constant qualities derived from the observation of the interplay of cosmic powers, comprises antithetical meanings (see the proverb: "similar as night and day" – Nkp 2, 536, 22). As in the case of the annual cycle, they lead to reconstruction of the traditional vision of man and the universe. Much of contemporary research into folk culture and literature displays the conviction about the existence of this traditional vision, albeit not in the form of a verbalized comprehensive doctrine known and accessible to all members of local peasant communities.⁵ This vision appeared in cultural texts dealing with some aspects of folk existence. They were parts of the overall text of folklore which drew both from collective memory, from inter-generational verbal transmission, and from non-verbal aspects of culture manifest in traditionally sanctioned patterns of behavior and in other realms of social organization.⁶ According to W. Pawluczuk, such text of folklore existed and functioned very vaguely: as an explanation of life and man, as certain general principles realized and formulated indistinctly, imprecisely.⁷

The present reconstruction of this "philosophy" poses considerable difficulties; in many cases it is grounded on mere speculation. Its system of evaluation concerned primarily the real foundations of being (the folk knowledge of the world and philosophy of nature and the universe, created laboriously from experiences of many generations, explained principally life); it only marginally referred to the abstract conception of the cosmos, man and nature. This "philosophy" was based on the logical association of certain facts compared by C. Lévi-Strauss to the kind of creation called *bricolage*, in which the creator-

-constructor used various substitutes as his substance, which composed a non-homogeneous, even accidental set. Its production was subordinated to no initial plan but to mere instrumentality of means.⁸ In folk symbolic imagination, and specifically in myth (understood as the proto-source, as general aetiology, as a superior reality revealing the strict order of the world) this specific *bricolage* assumes the shape of a logical, coherent vision of the world.⁹ It resembles the order of the clock, in which, as C. Lévi-Strauss stated in his conversation with G. Charbonnier, all pinions harmoniously participate in the same action – unlike those mechanisms which seem to contain a secret antagonism between the source of energy and the cooling part.¹⁰

Elements of folk culture are never separate, isolated, fortuitous, unrelated. All attempts at their explanation lead to broad reflection pertaining to diverse and extensive areas of culture. This entails permanent interpenetration of the empirical reality and the myth, of rational and mythical thinking, of observations of the macrocosm and a vision of the microcosm. The reality becomes incorporated in myth and acquires universal, exemplary meanings; eternal laws and instinctive convictions start to function in the realm of culture.¹¹ To paraphrase G. van der Leeuw's idea: to get to know the myth means to penetrate to the hidden structures through which man perceives and interprets the reality.¹² The mythical system and its constituent representations enable the comprehension of general laws governing the order of the universe, pertaining to archaic visions of being. They serve to establish relations of homology between natural and social conditions (e.g. interaction between an individual and social heritage), and precisely to define the law of balance between characteristic many-layered opposites. These contradictions form a semantic chain whose links are connected by the principles of opposition, correlation or analogy. The proto-source of all these is the logical paradigm of cosmogony which reflects the mythical act of creation, the process of structuralization, the formation of the ordered world from its chaotic proto-state, achieved through the violation of pre-creational unity of all things when the light was separated from

the darkness and the night and the day were formed, when the world saw the light of day for the first time.

In Polish and Slavic folklore, the principal explanatory function attributed to the structure of the fundamental myth¹³ (both as officially accepted Judeo-Christian cosmogony and as syncretistic cosmogonic myths, formed at least partly from original elements of the Christian religion or from their transformations¹⁴) leads to distinguishing the basic binary opposition of Night-Day. This opposition reflects the basic natural dualism of darkness and light, as well as the symbolic moral formula of evil and good and all its qualities correlated in series of symbolic equivalence of signs. The attempt at their exegetical-operational investigation will be made in terms of two basic logical operators of classification:

1) on the ontological-cosmological stratum (cosmogenesis): chaos, destruction, amorphousness, the state of potentiality (modality) – as opposed to their various hierarchical ordering, formation;

2) on the ontological-anthropological stratum (anthropogenesis): death, the Other World, the subconscious, passivity, immobility, silence, the horizontal – as opposed to life, This World, the conscious, activity, work, motion, noise, the vertical.

According to the principles of mythical thinking the diptych of darkness and light symbolizes the cosmic night (its darkness being the original state) and the cosmic day.¹⁵ The night precedes the creation of all things, it “gives birth” to the day; like water, it denotes fertility, potentiality, the power to produce. Thus, darkness precedes light, the light of day emerges gradually from the darkness of night and the falling night does not emerge from the light of day but covers it. This regularity is sanctioned by the epic Night-Day formula.¹⁶ The day is born from the night (not vice versa), as it represents the more developed state of the cosmos: shaped and inhabited by human beings. The Night-Day transformation is progressive, whereas the Day-Night transformation is regressive. Many people measure days from sunset to sunset.¹⁷

Man, quiescent and asleep during the night, resumes his

activity with the reappearance of the light of day: this act re-creates the emergence of light-life from the original darkness (the biblical formula *Post tenebris lux* bestows an existential sense upon this rule). Thus, every alternation of the night and the day reactualizes the cosmogonic myth: it re-creates the transition from the state of chaos to the state of cosmos. This repetition of the mythical act of creation follows the belief in the original existence of the cosmic Night, darkness – the amorphous state of the cosmos identified with waters symbolizing chaos, larval modality of existence.¹⁸ This state preceded the creation and evolution of all things which emerged after the appearance of the light of day and the re-establishment of forms and borders. This idea was reflected in the oldest tales, which depict the setting sun as “hiding in some unknown sea” (*ZWAK* 2, 126, 15; Kolb 7, 193-4), through which it travels to another world to shine for the whole night, and returns to our world on the following day as the tired, red rising sun (*Wisła* 7, 119). Thus, the light creates forms of existence. A similar exegesis is given in the well-known passage from *Book of Genesis*:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

(Gen 1, 2-5)

The antithesis of the productive force of light and the destructive force of darkness lay at the basis of the primordial dualism in Slavic mythology: it gave birth to the dualism of the superior realm of light and the inferior realm of darkness, of the two divinities worshipped by Western Slavs: the White God (of light and day) and the Black God¹⁹ (of darkness and night). In the language of folklore this opposition assumes the shape of such well-known *loci communes* as “white/bright day,”²⁰ “black/dark night.” These two contrary modes of existence are exemplified by the following folk riddle:

There are two brothers: a white one and a black one. When they meet they make way for each other and never look at each other, because the first would get dark and the second would get white. [day and night] (Folf Pzl 132, 546)

The white is the colour of sanctity, perfection, rebirth. These meanings are implied by the metaphorical representation of the sun as "the morning white bird which wakes the whole world" (*MAAE* 6, 286, 28), as well as by the direct indication of the God who gave the white day (Kolb 16, 303, 498). The blackness (darkness) of night (the most strongly articulated moment of time) points to the absence of light (see the riddle: "a blind daughter" [night] – *ZWAK* 17, 208, 228; see also *Wisła* 10, 871) and to danger (see the saying: "afraid as of the dark night" – *Nkp* 1, 47, 10). But primarily it is associated with a wide range of meanings attributed to the semantically related oppositions of open/closed and inside/outside, with uncovering/covering as the predicate of transition from one to the other component: "dark as at night" (*Wisła* 15, 80) synonymous with such expressions as – dark as in a grave, in a cellar, in a chimney, in a sack, in hell (Kolb 4, 316, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14).

In Polish and Slavic dualistic cosmogony, the symbolic dichotomy of the universe is intensified by the struggle of the pair of antithetical uranian-chthonian demiurges: God (representing the fire as the essential attribute of the sun and the heaven) and the Devil (representing the cosmic waters) who jointly create the universe (the Russian folk saying that the universe was born from the tsar-fire and the tsarina-water²¹ is assumed to be the shortest version of the cosmogonic myth). Each Slavic cosmogonic myth reveals a sharp internal antagonism of these two elemental forces. This may be exemplified by the story of the beginning of the world from the region of Kraków (Cracow), which resembles the Judeo-Christian cosmogony: „there was first the heaven in which the God of light had ruled for centuries; lower, on his left side, there was the prince of darkness who was subordinated to the God of light” (Kolb 7, 3-4).

Further reconstruction of the myth would broaden the polarity God/Devil by including the opposition of concrete features and qualities connected with the creation of the Earth, the structuring of the cosmos and anthropogenesis (its folk version was close to the biblical one). The co-operation and rivalry of two kinds of antithetical deities – the ruling and the defeated – became *sine qua non* for ordering and evaluating the universe, based on acts of separation and division. They also comprised spatial stratification of the universe into heaven, the earth and the underworld. This entailed diversified representation of the underworld as the place of habitation of dead and chthonic demons, and of the upper world – as the seat of gods and, later, also of chosen people (after death). This traditional tripartite verticality may be reduced to the dichotomy: This World (i.e. the physical cosmos, the solar system; in its folk version it is reduced to the sun, the earth, the moon and stars) and the Other World (consisting of Heaven²² as the seat of God and of Hell as the hypostasis of evil, the image of impending punishment). According to R. Tomicki, this ordering assumes the shape of a developed dualistic scheme: a set of binary categories situated on various levels, describing various phenomena in the realms of both *civitas Dei* (identified with day) and *civitas Diaboli* (identified with night). They were conveyed in folk verbal and non-verbal communication of the second half of XIXth and beginning of XXth century: either directly or by implication.²³ However, this *imago mundi* was created through coexistence and confrontation of the Christian doctrine with more or less simplified folk beliefs.

Daily symbolic recreation of cosmogony – emergence from the dark night of the white day, a sign of cosmic and moral order – was made possible by God's rule over the world, by the victory of light over darkness, the appearance of divine light, of heavenly, divine fire. It was also represented as God's eye or face – the sun, regarded as the highest heavenly hierophany of the day.²⁴ The concepts of light and divinity were joined already in pre-Christian times, yet this combination reached its apogee in the medieval philosophy of light (*vera lux* – God). According to

the Gospel of St. John, God is pure light and no darkness.²⁵ This inspired Augustinian idea that *Deus veritas est; hic enim scriptum est; quoniam Dei lux est.*²⁶ It derived from the primitive myth about the solar Demiurge, directly connected with fertility and the vegetation of plants.²⁷ This justifies use of the metaphor of sun-oak, e.g. in Polish folk riddles: "an oak-tree stands in the middle of the village (the world); its twigs peep into every cottage" (ZWAK 17, 241, 392-4).²⁸ In Slavic culture the oak was considered to be a tree of divine attributes: good, pure, holy (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 531). Its light was divine:

The sunlight comes from under the seventh choir in the heavenly palace. On Our Lady's decision, a wicket is always left there ajar to let the heavenly brightness fall upon the sun and make it shine. If God ordered to close it, the sun would get dark altogether.

(Kolb 7, 28)

Clear Christian theological evaluation of the solar symbolism points to the solar structure of God, the Cosmocrator who creates and gives life on both cosmic and social levels. In *The Old Testament*, God's light appeared together with life, to express His powerful blessing for people on the Earth. Already the first Christians faced east during their prayers to worship Christ the Lord as "the light of the world," "the sun of justice." It was believed that the sunset was darkness, as was Satan, whose power is in darkness. Symbolically facing east means renunciation of darkness and its dismal ruler.²⁹ As evidenced by field research, even between World War I and World War II, peasants from various parts of Poland crossed themselves at the moment of sunrise, they took off their headgear and kneeled, or turned toward the rising sun and prostrated themselves before it. Their prayers welcomed the rosy, beautiful, divine sun as the heavenly treasure which shines for poor people on the Earth.³⁰ In the Silesian Highlands the first stanza of the religious song "*Kiedy ranne wstają zorze*" was said during sunrise. In other regions of Poland short greetings took the form of formulas of communication: e.g. in the area of Maków in Małopolska (Little Poland) the sun was welcomed with a triple invocation to the

divine luminosity, which illuminates the whole world and sinful people (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 138). In the course of the expansion and consolidation of Christianity the former solar cult (which played a very significant role in Slavic magico-cultic systems) assumed the shape of the cult of *Lumen Christi* which either directly identified the sun with the Christian God or showed it as indirectly derived from God (whereas primordial somatic formulae and verbal magic aimed at casting a spell over the “newly born” sun – a kind of inceptive magic).³¹

In Slavic myths the sun was anthropomorphized: e.g. as a man walking, looking and eating honey (Kolb 7, 28; *Wisła* 14, 467, 54). It was believed to be born every morning, then to pass through childhood, manhood, old age and to die in the evening. According to the principle of semantic proportion, isomorphism, this cosmic cycle could be transferred onto the stratum of anthropogenesis, of the birth of the mythical ancestor, the creation of man. In the beauty of daybreak, in the glory of noon, and in the evening death, the sun’s “life” during the day represents man’s life.³² According to proverbs, the evening is for the day what old age is for life (hence the evening may be called the old age of day, and the old age – the evening of life),³³ life is like a flower in May which blooms in the morning and withers in the evening (Nkp 3, 971). The mythical foundations of this idea were expressed already in the riddle of the Sphinx: which animal has a voice, in the morning goes on all fours, at noon – on two legs, and in the evening – on three? [Man moves in the morning, i.e. in his childhood, on all fours, when adult – he becomes a two-legged animal, and in his old age, the evening of his life – he uses a stick which is like his third leg].³⁴ Thus, the cosmogonic calendrical and diurnal-nocturnal cycles are very close, they represent the same mythologem: dawn – spring – birth; zenith – summer – maturity; sunset – autumn – old age; night – winter – death.

Already medieval etymologies, penetrating mysteries of the universe, derived the notion of sunset not from *occidēre* (from *ob* and *cadere*) – “to set,” but from *occidēre* (from *ob* and *caedere*)³⁵ – “to kill.” Hence comes the saying “his sun is already set,” i.e.

he lost his happiness, fortune or life.³⁶ However, this was not a real death but one implying rebirth, represented by the Christian ceremony of Resurrection (hence the cult of the dead was identified with the solar cult – through the symbolic promise of protection and salvation). The sunset was associated with the underworld, with death, and the sunrise – with new life: hence the practices of placing the dead on the axis of the sun (the east-west), of saying prayer formulas during sunrise.³⁷ The sun – the greatest power in the universe, the heart of the cosmos, the transcendental archetype of light – symbolizes both life and death, and regeneration of life through death, as it constantly rises and sets, as its rays have the power of both animation and destruction. Every night it passes through the empire of death, to reappear every morning. Thus it may bring people and put them to death, as well as point souls the way through subterranean regions to bring them the next day to light. M. Eliade views these phenomena in terms of the ambivalent function of the psychopomp (putting souls to death and guiding them) and the initiating hierophant.³⁸ In the earthly scale, on the temporal stratum of the everyday, the opposition of Day-Night refers to the dualism of God and the Devil: it assumes the solar-funerary and chthonian structure and connotes the antithesis of life and death. Each immersion in the darkness of night denotes a symbolic encounter with death, a ritualistic annihilation of existence, assuming that darkness without light is synonymous with death, as God assigned the day to the living and the night to the dead (Thietmar from Merseburg). This is for example reflected in a funny folk way of waking inmates for breakfast: “get up you dead to eat” (*Wisła* 10, 627; *Nkp* 3, 586).

In the annual sequence (structurally parallel to the diurnal-nocturnal sequence) the same significance is acquired by the opposition of summer and winter, which renders the microcosm as a replica of the macrocosm. Thus, the Earth is the area of confrontation between two antagonistic forces, the cosmic sphere where brightness, day and summer alternate with dark-

ness, night and winter. The mediating position of the Earth in the spatial configuration of the universe is rendered by R. Tomicki's mythical construction:

state A	– Heaven	– God	– metaphysical life
state A and non-A	– the Earth	– Man	– biological life
B and non-B			(the rhythm of life and death)
state B	– the Underworld	– the Devil	– metaphysical death. ³⁹

Thus Man, placed in the mediating position as well, is exposed to the influence of both these contradictory powers, which determine his life and death. Agrarian cults developed the cosmic religion based on the principle of periodical regeneration of the world. Since human life and the world are understood in terms of life of nature, the cosmic and anthropogonic cycles infinitely repeat the same rhythm: birth – death – birth – death. In folkloric texts-behaviors, symbolic meaning is attributed principally to the dynamic opposition of the passage from the phase of diurnal activity to the phase of nocturnal passivity, non-existence (followed by restoration of existence with the re-emergence of light). The liminal structure of the night acquired complete autonomy in the model of the rites of passage of this fundamental cycle. This individual ritual is structuralized in a tripartite pattern: 1) separation and destructuralization, 2) the liminal (marginal) phase (*limen*), 3) restructuralization (organization into new relationships). In this scheme the place of night is central: it liberates man from his former social structural roles and makes him assume new symbolic roles.⁴⁰ This liminality does not presuppose structural contradictions, but rather what is essentially unstructured, i.e. simultaneously destructured and prestructured. Nocturnal structural invisibility of liminal persons has a dual nature: they are simultaneously no longer classified and not yet classified, neither alive nor dead from one perspective and both alive and dead from another perspective. They are posed “betwixt and between,”⁴¹ in an ambiguous state; they mix all regular categories. Thus, logically antithetical processes of symbolic death and life may be represented by the same signs as pre-natal and funerary darkness. In contemporary psychology and history of religion these

motifs are denoted by the common name of *regressus ad uterum* and *descensus ad inferos*⁴² – the process of life from death and towards death.

J. Boehme, the German mystic whose writings inspired Hegel to formulate his famous dialectical triad, used to say that everything is comprised in “yes” and “no.”⁴³ Liminality may be thus treated as “no,” as negation of all positive structural statements, but also, in a sense, as their source, and even more – as the realm of pure possibility from which new configurations of ideas and relations may arise (according to V. W. Turner).⁴⁴ The status of man at night at home, situated symbolically in the center of the world, in the cosmological point of communication between Heaven, Earth and Hell (symbolic assimilation of home to the center of the world) acquires features of magico-cultic inclusion. This situation usually models a definite cosmic principle, causes a true ontological transformation:⁴⁵ through symbolic or biological death of one state it leads to rebirth in a new mode of existence. The symbolism of night and darkness, a paradigmatic reflection of cosmogonic myths, discloses its initiatory nature: a structural link between the pre-cosmic, pre-natal darkness and death, rebirth and initiation (as mentioned, the contrast between night and day is here isomorphic with the contrast between death and birth). Human life progresses as a sequence of periods; according to C. J. Bleeker, it always denotes initiation into a new reality, new truth.⁴⁶ This passage takes place in each kind of cosmic existence, just like man’s passage from pre-life through life to death, reflecting the mythical Ancestor’s sun’s transition from darkness to light. This movement is a variant of a larger, more universal process, in which the moon is the archetype of cosmic becoming, and plants – the symbol of permanent rebirth. Therefore, according to M. Eliade, the cosmos was represented as an immense tree: its capabilities of rebirth being symbolically expressed by the life of the tree⁴⁷ (see the riddle: “there stands a sycamore in the middle, it has 12 boughs, 4 nests on each bough, and 7 eggs in each nest” [year, months, days] – *Lud* 17, 83, 25).

Initiatory nocturnal symbolism is bound up with the Christian conception of anthropological dualism (comprising the antithesis of the top and the bottom), widespread in the XIXth century folk outlook. This ideology was developed especially by St. Augustine and many later outstanding theologians in the first millenium of Christianity.⁴⁸ In view of this theory, death consists in the separation of the soul from the body: from this moment the fate of the soul is independent of the fate of the body – the temporary abode, which the soul abandons in order to pass to the superior, spiritual existence.⁴⁹ The motif of separation of the soul from the body and its journey in the supernatural world belonged to popular visionary motifs not only in Poland, but also in eschatological imagery of most religious systems and mythologies. These themes were current in exempla from the turn of the XIVth century.⁵⁰ This provenance is most probably indicated by the folk idea of the duality of human nature, which entails ontological transformation of the existential order (passage from being to non-being and vice versa). This idea is conveyed in beliefs explaining dreams, according to which “every man embodies another human being – spirit, soul. When ‘the other’ leaves the body for a short time – the man sleeps, when it leaves for long – he dies” (*Wisła* 5, 631). Appropriate forms of etiquette functioned as mediators: for example the taboo of sleeping with one’s shoes on foreboded death, not waking up any more (*Wisła* 19, 152).

It was believed that when man falls asleep his soul goes to heaven, where it writes down its sins in the so called “book of sins” with the little finger of its right hand; when the soul comes back the man wakes. A soul sometimes finds it difficult or even impossible to return. Hence a children’s morning prayer thanks the living and eternal King for the mercy of giving their souls back (*Wisła* 18, 106, 159). This should explain the equivalence of sleep and death, prevailing in folk consciousness (see the popular saying: to sleep like a dead man), so characteristic of liturgy and Christian dogmas (see the funeral mass *Missa pro dormitione*: for waking up for Doomsday⁵¹). It is believed that a sleeping man resembles a dead person: “if you squeeze his little finger or put

a ladle in his hand when he starts to speak through sleep, he will tell about what happens in the Other World; this is dangerous, though, both for the sleeper and for his listeners" (*Wisła* 19, 152).

The equivalence of sleep to symbolic death and of biological death to sleep (falling asleep as a euphemism for dying) is strictly connected with the visionary code based on the journey in the Other World of the soul which left its body⁵² – the journey with a clearly specified cognitive aim. This initiation pertains especially to places of eternal punishment and reward, and this experience is meant to serve many of the living ones. Such contact with new, esoteric knowledge, within the equivalence of sleep to symbolic death, occurred in dreams treated as mysterious adventures of the soul during sleep – in folk mentality they were connected with ghosts of the dead, as well as with wandering ghosts of other people. Hence dream visions were significant for people (see the interethnic proverb: Night is the mother of advice⁵³): a powerful dead man appeared in them as a herald of the future (most often foreboding death or misfortune).⁵⁴ Dreams were interpreted in folk mentality as "relationships of people with saints or spirits of the dead. In this way people blessed by God acquire numerous pieces of advice, many dead wrong-doers request forgiveness, many mysteries are explained" (Kolb 48, 277) – especially if a dream is repeated for two consecutive nights, which is a signal confirming the imparted information (*Wisła* 19, 152). Thus, dreams revealed the superhuman world, introduced into the unknown, hidden and fascinating realms of thinking and feeling. The nocturnal initiation ensured man's spiritual development, his cognition of a new truth, a new sphere of reality (the didactic element of initiation).

The value of this internal, esoteric aspect of nocturnal initiation was connected with the common belief in the existence of communication between the microcosm and the macrocosm, which revealed its mysteries to man in various ways (also through manifold secret activities). This knowledge was also deciphered by means of cosmogonic-initiatory signs and symbols which defined the alternation of night and day. The time of dreams, wrapped up in the nocturnal darkness, deprived of the

logic of diurnal ordering, anomalous, most often presupposed explication through reverse ordering.⁵⁵ According to a proverb, in dreams the reality is always reversed (*MAAE* 4, 235), in order to provoke a dream one should put the inside of his shirt outside before falling asleep (*Wisła* 19, 153). Inversion (e.g. replacing the right with the left, the top with the bottom, the front with the rear) belonged to features characteristic of the Other World.⁵⁶ The principle of reversal, ordering the realm on the other side of the mirror, was essential to the space which was unsafe, remained beyond the sphere of human activity, to the time of the unconscious. The nocturnal condition of the man remaining outside the community of the living, outside his social structure, in the natural state, deprived of possessions, evokes the initiatory scenario.⁵⁷ Rites of initiation comprised also nocturnal abstinence from meals⁵⁸ – the signs of life which were out of place in the sphere of death (the opposition of night and day in the festive time was determined by another symbolic order – but this is a separate question).

The Great Initiation consists in the equivalence of sleep to biological death which could happen at night. For many important reasons it is generally considered to be unfavorable, dangerous for man, arising from loss of God's Grace (as religious people believed). Death was not regarded as the end of existence, but rather the moment in which the soul leaves the body to start a new, bodiless being. The transition from the status of a living member of a community to the status of its dead member, as in every *rite de passage*, had to conform to an appropriate ritual. Among Polish peasants of the XIXth century this ritual was created from old eschatological notions and was transformed in the process of the acculturation of religion, which consisted in the manifestation of values peculiar to a definite religious system and in their adaptation to the practical needs of a village community. Fear of death at night – both sudden and ill⁵⁹ – originated in the belief that night is the time of activity of demons of illnesses (*Wisła* 14, 399), when sick people are most exposed to the danger of death (the double liminality of night and illness, hence increased danger).⁶⁰ This anxiety was con-

nected with the conviction that a man should not die alone (it was a collective ritual, like all *rites de passage*): the intentions and behavior of the people surrounding his death-bed should facilitate his safe passage to a new form of being, should ensure the best possible existence for his soul in the Other World – according to the belief that a well equipped and happy soul has no reasons to come back and punish the living.⁶¹ The living and the dead belong to the same *communitas*; they constitute its two distinct sub-groups, realms separated by strictly demarcated boundaries. Man always appeared as a member of a social group; he could fulfil his expectations only within it. A community determined his personality:⁶² his experiences and convictions contributed to his individuality only as far as they were accepted by the group, tolerated by its preventive censorship (this mechanism pertained both to psycho-social behavior and verbal messages). In consequence of the conviction about the existence of these clearly defined boundaries, as impure and dangerous were regarded the instances of contact which did not follow the ritualistic relations between these communities.⁶³ Hence such great importance was attached to behaviors obeying rules of etiquette of a community.

Ars bene moriendi, created in the final phase of the Middle Ages, supported by regulations of the Church authorities, was strongly imprinted on the consciousness of Polish peasants of the second half of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth centuries (the ethnographic-folkloric material of the present investigations comes mostly from this time). The etiquette of the liminal situation of dying (of good death) required absolute fulfilment of Church sacraments (confession, Communion, Extreme Unction) and external symbolic practices. These practices comprised visual elements (use of sacramental objects: lighting a candle blessed on Candlemas Day, sprinkling with holy water), but they principally amounted to settling in these last hours of life (see the saying: All hours hurt, the last one kills)⁶⁴ all matters connected with the dying man's participation in the life of his community. This was achieved for example through reconciliation (treated as a specific form of expiation)

and remittal of wrongs. All this was meant to restore balance (order and harmony were invariable notions in the folk vision of the world) and to erase borders which could obstruct a soul's journey to the Other World (to make death easier) and final reconciliation with God.

Lonely death at night, just like sudden death or one caused by somebody's act of will, precludes fulfilment of the magico-religious practices bringing an individual's aggregation to the new state, and thus – eliminates a possibility of safe passage to the community of the dead. This situation gives birth to demoniacal beings placed in the area of eternal liminality – unfavorable for communities of both the living and the dead (according to L. Stomma, they left state X in a biological sense and did not leave it in a magico-ritual sense, as well as entered state Y in a biological sense and did not enter it in a magico-ritual sense⁶⁵). According to demoniacal beliefs, these creatures became various kinds of ghosts, vampires, spirits, nightmares, witches, hobgoblins, etc., roaming post-mortem. Contaminated by death, they brought death to people or played malicious tricks on them. They reigned over winds and waters, submitted to the power of the moon – the ruler of darkness and night. Sometimes they assumed the shapes of tawny owls, black animals, horrifying nocturnal monsters. They inhabited waters – rivers or lakes – the same which during the day were evaluated in a totally different way: they were respected as symbolizing life. A similar distinction concerns nocturnal lights, e.g. will-o'-the-wisps, believed to embody the souls of those who died unnaturally, and especially the light of the moon – treated as belonging to the world beyond human life (according to E. Seler: *Der Mond ist der erste gestorbene*⁶⁶). This category of demons comprised both those who died a premature or sudden death⁶⁷ and those who passed away during or close to some rite of passage: dead or aborted fetuses, unchristened children, women who died in childbirth, those engaged to marry, those who died immediately before or during their wedding, suicides.⁶⁸ Hence there were numerous prayers, both canonical and non-canonical, for protection against sudden and unexpected death, evil death but

also for easy death (see the hymn to Holy God from the cycle of hymns sung at the display of the Holy Sacrament during the Catholic Eucharist liturgy).

Communication between This World and the Other World was noticed also in the process of good, conscious, natural death; it enabled both the moribund⁶⁹ and the community to prepare for this act. This relationship was manifest in the supernatural causes of perceived phenomena, as according to folk mentality everything originated in the superhuman world was by no means fortuitous. The omens of death (specific to the community of the living) comprised signs from the Other World (for example death embodied as an animal – a dog, a black cat – appearing in the vicinity of the moribund's house; according to folk beliefs animal born blind may see death⁷⁰); they also comprised signs specific to the moribund (for example a human being, a woman who sits at the stove – *MAAE* 7, 8, 29). She comes as God's messenger in order to cut the thread of somebody's life (if she comes in the day-time she may be propitiated, for which she is rebuked by God).⁷¹ In Church iconography she is represented as a skeleton with a scythe (the two different ways of her portrayal, mentioned above, reflect the dualism of the "official," religious outlook vs. the "unofficial," pre-Christian mentality⁷²). This image derived from the ancient representation of time (Gr. *Chronos*, Lat. *Tempus*) as an old man with scythe, which was later transferred upon the notion of death (see the proverb: "Time is a beggar but with a scythe" – Nkp 1, 355, 12).

The mystical, prelogical imagination, manifest in folk communication, both verbal (texts) and non-verbal (patterns of behavior preserved in inter-generational transmission), combined concrete, real phenomena with the occult power of their origin.⁷³ This mentality displayed the peculiar interaction of the ontological-cosmological and ontological-anthropological strata centered upon the dualism of darkness and light contrasted in the Night-Day formula. Further implications of this mystical causality appear also on the anthropological-ethical-axiological and anthropological-psychological strata, which will be considered in the next chapter.

NOTES

¹ See e.g. H. Podbielski: *Mit kosmogoniczny w "Teogonii" Hezjoda*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1978; R. Tomicki: "Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 47-97; R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism in the Slavic Cosmogonic Myth," in *Poland at the Tenth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, ed. M. Frankowska and others, trans. J. Sehnert, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1978, p. 59-67; M. Eliade: *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. W. R. Trask, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1954 (Bollingen series XLVI); W. N. Toporow: "Kosmogoniczeskije mify," in *Mify narodow mira*, vol. 2, ed. S. A. Tokariew, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Encikłopedija, 1988, p. 6-9; M. Leach: *The Beginning. Creation Myths around the World*, New York: 1956.

² See C. Lévi-Strauss: *Antropologia strukturalna*, Introduction B. Suchodolski, trans. K. Pomian, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970, p. 312.

³ See P. Kowalski: "Folklor – próba nowej definicji operacyjnej," *Literatura Ludowa*, 1989, no. 3, p. 4.

⁴ J. Łotman: *Struktura tekstu artystycznego*, trans. A. Tanalska, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1984, p. 70 and others; J. Łotman: "O znaczeniach we wtórnych systemach modelujących," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1969, no. 1, p. 279-94; J. Łotman: "Wykłady z poetyki strukturalnej," in *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą*, ed. H. Markiewicz, vol. 2, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976, p. 138-53; R. Tomicki: "Mit," in *Słownik etnologiczny. Terminy ogólne*, ed. Z. Staszczak, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1987, p. 245.

⁵ For example research into folk ontology, M. R. Gerlich: *Wizja świata i człowieka w ontologii (ludowej) śląskiej ludności rodzimej*, manuscript in Department of Folkloristics University of Opole.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ W. Pawluczuk: *Żywiół i forma*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978, p. 96.

⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss: *Myśl nieoswojona*, trans. A. Zajączkowski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969, p. 33.

⁹ S. E. Hyman: "The Ritual View of Myth and the Mythic," in *Myth. A Symposium*, ed. T. A. Sebeok, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974, p. 136-53.

¹⁰ G. Charbonnier: *Rozmowy z Claude Lévi-Straussem*, trans. J. Trznadel, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1968, p. 30.

¹¹ L. Stomma: *Słońce rodzi się 13 grudnia*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1981, p. 8.

¹² G. van der Leeuw: "L'homme primitif et la religion," quoted after R. Tomicki: "Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 47.

¹³ E.g. E. Mieleński: *Poetyka mitu*, trans. J. Dancygier, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981, p. 288 and others.

¹⁴ According to C. Lévi-Strauss, each myth should be treated as a collection of all its versions; thus, multiple cosmogonies constitute merely transformations of the proto-text: see *Antropologia strukturalna...*, p. 297-8; G. Augustynowicz: "Transformacje mitu kosmogonicznego (próba budowy modelu)" *Lud*, 1987, vol. 71, p. 111-26.

¹⁵ See J. A. MacCulloch: "Light and Darkness (Primitive)," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, vol. 7, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, p. 47-51.

¹⁶ Purposeful use of this formula in this order points to the custom (known since antiquity) of treating the night as the beginning of the nocturnal-diurnal cycle: see G. R. Lloyd: "Czas w myśli greckiej," in *Czas w kulturze*, ed., selection, and Introduction A. Zajaczkowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988, p. 210.

¹⁷ M. L. West: *Hesiod. Theogony*, Oxford: 1966, p. 197, quoted after H. Podbielski: *op. cit.*, p. 120-1.

¹⁸ W. N. Toporow: "Kosmogonickieskije mify...", p. 7-9.

¹⁹ See A. N. Afanasjew: "Świat i t'ma," in A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda i wieszczęje słowo*, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Rossija, 1988, p. 124-6. A. Brückner opposes the theory about Slavic provenance of these gods: according to him, their origin was Christian – see *Mitologia słowiańska i polska*, ed. and Introduction S. Urbańczyk, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985, p. 198-9.

²⁰ E. P. Bławatskaja writes that Latin peoples derived the name of God from Aryan *Dyaus* (day): see *Tajnaja doktrina. Izwleczenije iz otdiela "Ewolucyja simwolizma,"* vol. 1, ed. A. Kamienskaja and E. P. Bławatskaja, Pietrograd: 1915, p. 57. The supreme Greek god Zeus (Jove) was a relative of the Aryan god: both names have a common Indo-European element *div*, which means "to shoot," "to shine." Hence these gods were the Lords of lightnings and thunderbolts, of heavens and light.

²¹ A. N. Afanasjew: *Poeticzeskija wozzrenija sławian na prirodu. Opyt srawnitielnogo izuczenija sławianskich predanij i wierowanij w swjazi s mifičeskimi skazanijami drugih rodswiennych narodow*, vol. 2, Moskwa: K. Sołdatienkowa, 1868, p. 468.

²² See M. Niewiadomska: "Ludowa wizja kosmosu w gminie Głuchów," *Łódzkie Studia Etnograficzne*, 1981, vol. 23, p. 141. According to the author's informants, the Sky is blue and the sun, stars, clouds do not belong to the sky but are situated in it.

²³ R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism...", p. 59-67.

²⁴ See R. Tomicki: "Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny...", p. 70.

²⁵ According to R. M. Dorson, the mythical man always, in all prehistoric cultures, constructed his pantheon around solar phenomena: see "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," *The Study of Folklore*, ed. A. Dundes, Englewood Cliffs N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965, p. 64.

²⁶ Quoted after W. Schöne: *Über das Licht in der Malerei*, Berlin: 1954, p. 59; also M. Rzepińska: *Studia z teorii i historii koloru*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1966, p. 148.

²⁷ M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii*, trans. J. Wierusz-Kowalski, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1966, p. 153. This relationship is evidenced for example by the symbol of green meadow in the juxtaposition of This World and the Other World appearing in the folk song entitled "*Dusza z ciała wyleciała*" [A soul left its body] (*Wisła* 3, 609). Exuberance of grass, flowers and all vegetation, as well as luminosity, belong to its constant attributes: see T. Michałowska: "Zielona łąka," in T. Michałowska: "'Dusza z ciała wyleciała.' Próba interpretacji," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1989, no. 2, p. 14-19.

²⁸ This symbolic sign of nature (as well as sycamore) appears in folk carols, too, i. e. outside the cycle of nocturnal-diurnal transformation. There it grows in the middle of the farmyard, within the sacred space of the farm. See C. Hernas: "Kolędy niekantyczkowe," *Literatura Ludowa*, 1993, no. 3, p. 80.

²⁹ See E. B. Tylor: *Primitive Culture. Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, vol. 2, London: John Murray, 1929, p. 428.

³⁰ See J. Bartmiński: entry "Słońce" [sun], in *Słownik ludowych stereotypów językowych*, zeszyt próbny, ed. J. Bartmiński, Introduction C. Hernas, Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 1980, p. 205-30; also K. Heckowa: *Pod znakiem świętego słońca. Dawne wierzenia śląskie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1963, p. 38.

³¹ See the old prayer to the sun said in all the region of Polesie on All Souls' Day in spring: in C. Pietkiewicz: "Kultura duchowa Polesia Rzeczyckiego," *Prace Etnologiczne*, 1938, no. 4, p. 295.

³² E. B. Tylor: *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³³ Quoted after A. N. Żurinskij: *Siemantическая структура загадки. Метафорическое преобразование смысла*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1989, p. 3-4.

³⁴ J. Parandowski: *Mitologia. Wierzenia Greków i Rzymian*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1990, p. 150-1.

³⁵ See A. Guriewicz: *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, trans. J. Dancygier, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976, p. 298.

³⁶ G. Jobs: *Dictionary of Mythology and Symbols*, vols. 1-2, New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1961, p. 1508.

³⁷ See E. B. Tylor: *op. cit.*, p. 422.

³⁸ M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii...*, p. 138-9; see also J. C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, p. 162.

³⁹ R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism..." p. 66.

⁴⁰ See e.g. D. Zadra: "Symbolic Time," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, vol. 14, New York: MacMillan, 1987, p. 196.

⁴¹ V. Turner: "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in V. Turner: *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 93-111.

⁴² See M. Eliade: *Aspects du mythe*, Paris: 1963, p. 102; M. Eliade: "L'initiation et le monde moderne," in *Initiation. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions*, ed. C. J. Bleeker, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965, p. 3.

⁴³ Quoted after V. Turner: "Betwixt and Between:...", p. 97.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁵ V. W. Turner: *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-structure*, Chicago: Aloline, 1969, p. 100-1.

⁴⁶ C. J. Bleeker: "Some Introductory Remarks on the Significance of Initiation," in *Initiation....*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii...*, p. 262.

⁴⁸ See E. Patkowski: *Dziedzictwo wierzeń pogańskich w średniowiecznych Niemczech. De Functi Vive*, Warszawa: 1973, p. 95; A. Kowalska-Lewicka: "Ludowe wyobrażenia śmierci," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1986, nos. 1-2, p. 24.

⁴⁹ See A. Kowalska-Lewicka: *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵⁰ See T. Michałowska: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁵¹ J. Wierusz-Kowalski: *Liturgika*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1956, p. 410.

⁵² See T. Michałowska: *op. cit.*, p. 3-26. The oldest trace of this song is preserved in the Wrocław manuscript from the beginning of the XVth century as supplement to the poem *Skarga umierającego*: see *Średniowieczna poezja polska świecka*, ed. S. Vrtel-Wierczyński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952, p. 49.

⁵³ *Proverbs. A Comparative Book of English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian Proverbs with a Latin Appendix*, ed. J. S. Gluski, Amsterdam: 1971, p. 18.

⁵⁴ On oneiromancy and its significance in man's life see S. Oświecimski: *Zeus daje tylko znak, Apollo wieszczy osobiście. Starożytne wróżbiarstwo greckie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1989, p. 75-83; *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. M. Leach, J. Fried, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1972, entry "dreams," p. 324-5; see also L. Lévy-Bruhl: *Czynności umysłowe w społeczeństwach pierwotnych*, trans. B. Szwarzman-Czarnota, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1992, p. 79 and others.

⁵⁵ This principle is pointed out e.g. by J. Bartmiński: "'Co się myśli to się przyśni.' O interpretacji obrazów w senniku ludowym," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1987, nos. 1-4, p. 122; see also principles of explanation of dreams: T. Seweryn: "Ikonografia etnograficzna," *Lud*, 1947, vol. 38, p. 271.

⁵⁶ See e.g. J. S. Wasilewski: "Po śmierci wędrować. Szkic z zakresu etnologii świata znaczeń (I)," *Teksty*, 1979, no. 3, p. 105 and others.

⁵⁷ See e.g. V. W. Turner: "Liminality and Communitas," in V. W. Turner: *The Ritual Process*..., p. 94-130.

⁵⁸ See P. Gerlitz: "Das Fasten als Initiationsritus," in *Initiation*..., p. 271-6.

⁵⁹ See H. Plessner: "On the Relation of Time to Death," in *Man and Time. Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, selected and trans. by O. Froebe-Kapteyn, vol. 3, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957, p. 248 (series XXX).

⁶⁰ On illness as a liminal phenomenon see e.g. L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 155 and others.

⁶¹ J. G. Frazer: *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion*, vol. 1, London: 1933, p. 176-7, quoted after A. Brencz: "Polska obrzędowość pogrzebowa jako obrzęd przejścia," *Lud*, 1987, p. 223.

⁶² See A. Guriewicz: *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*..., p. 312.

⁶³ See e.g. K. Renik: "O kontaktach ze zmarłymi – ludowe wyobrażenia," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1986, nos. 1-2, p. 31-9.

⁶⁴ The inscription, commonly made on faces of Christian clocks, read: *Vulnerant omnes. Ultima necet*, quoted after K. Gebert: "Skonać przed śmiercią," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1986, nos. 1-2, p. 22.

⁶⁵ L. Stomma: "Mit Alkmeny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 108; L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*..., p. 161.

⁶⁶ Quoted after M. Eliade: *Traktat o historii religii*..., p. 172.

⁶⁷ L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*..., p. 161.

⁶⁸ See D. K. Zielenin: *Oczerki russkoj mifologii*, part I, Petersburg: 1916; also L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*..., p. 161.

⁶⁹ M. Włodarski: *Ars moriendi w literaturze polskiej XV i XVI w.*, Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy "Znak," 1987.

⁷⁰ According to materials from the Nowy Sącz Highlands collected by A. Kowalska-Lewicka: see *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁷¹ Her human impulses and disobedience to God are illustrated for example by the most popular of Sabala's tales *O śmierci* [On death] recorded for example by H. Sienkiewicz – published in *Czas*, 1889, no. 170; many times reprinted. See "Komentarz," in *Sabalowe bajki*, ed. and selected T. Brzozowska, Introduction J. Krzyżanowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969, p. 130.

⁷² See A. Kowalska-Lewicka: *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷³ L. Lévy-Bruhl: *Primitive Mentality*, trans. L. A. Clare, London: Allen und Unwin, 1923, p. 93.

CHAPTER III

CIVITAS DEI AND CIVITAS DIABOLI, OR DIURNAL ACTIVE SYMBOLS AND NOCTURNAL INACTIVE SYMBOLS

The man bears
the beginning of his own heaven
and of his own hell

(J. Tischner)

Repetitiveness is the most original and elementary principle of the symbolic temporal sequences of the Night-Day formula – in the spheres of both macrocosm and microcosm. It refers to the fundamental natural dualism of darkness and light, which in many religions and ideological systems engendered the moral dualism of evil and good. Our considerations in this chapter will be focussed on another aspect of the Night-Day formula, reflecting this dualism, realized on two strata: anthropological-ethical-axiological (with such key categories of classification as: evil, sin, hell – good, grace, heaven) and anthropological-psychological (classified by the unclear category, danger, activity of evil creatures – and the clear-cut category, safety, diurnal domination of God's religion).

The traditional formula white/bright day and black/dark night is very popular in Polish and Slavic folk traditions (see chapter II). This seemingly simple juxtaposition, connoting the antithesis of light and darkness (see the riddle: “a widow had two children // a black daughter and a shining son” – *ZWAK* 17, 209, 49) comprises a complex set of images rooted in the cultural tradition. It is a categorial component of the canon of oral

poetry, a constant image, a folk archetype, a proto-image of tradition relating to the fundamental myth about the separation of light and darkness and the creation of day and night – according to both the official Judeo-Christian cosmogony and the folk cosmogenesis (this myth constitutes a secondary modelling system which creates a set of values ordering the world). The struggle of two antagonistic demiurges of fiery and aquatic features (God and the Devil respectively) formed the kernel of this traditional opposition.¹ The principal, explanatory function of this myth indicates the strict dichotomic structure of the world. In the sphere of Night (darkness), as *civitas Diaboli*, this myth generates a series of symbolic sign systems: potentiality, shapelessness, chaos, destruction, death, the Other World, the subconscious, passivity, immobility, silence, the horizontal. And in the realm of Day (light), as *civitas Dei*, it respectively engenders: hierarchical order, shape, creation, life, This World, consciousness, activity, work, movement, noise, the vertical. The everyday symbolic re-creation of the cosmogony, i.e. the emergence from the nocturnal darkness of the “white day,” the sign of cosmic and moral order, became possible owing to the victory of light (God) over darkness (satanic forces), of life over death, of good over evil. In particular the ethical evaluation of the alternation of night and day reveals extensive layers of folk ontology, which explained primarily life, but also the “life after life.”

In the folk version of animistic thinking, stressing the polarity of human nature, “the other man” (ghost, soul)² was liable to ontological transformation of the existential order: the passage from being (day, life) to non-being (night, death). According to common belief, the fate of a soul separated from its body temporarily (sleep as symbolic death), and especially permanently (biological death as sleep) was determined by the ethical content of human life. The symmetry of the creation of the world (Day) and its destruction (Night) was manifest also on the anthropological stratum, as the symmetry of life and death: the kind of one’s penance after death reflecting the nature of his/her sins (Kolb 17, 86, 2). In folk mentality, eschatological geography

was strongly combined with the folk axiology based on differentiation and opposition of the upper and the lower zones of death (the phenomena typical of the vertical, trichotomic model of the cosmos). This produced two kinds of death (evil and good), and consequently, two modes of existence in the After Life: in the realms of eternal happiness (the system of signs: Heaven – God – metaphysical life) or eternal damnation (the Underworld – the Devil – metaphysical death).³ Folk eschatological beliefs displayed understanding of sin as violation of ethical prohibitions and of reward in the life after death as compensation for one's deeds on earth:

every evening, when one falls asleep, an angel and a devil stand at his/her bed. The Angel records good deeds, the Devil – evil ones. Later they are weighed on the pair of scales of a balance. God's Judgement comes after death. If the amount of sins prevails over the amount of good deeds, the soul is doomed and goes to the Devil. The Devil's record is increased when one falls asleep without saying prayers. But when such person wakes up at night, says his/her prayers, the Devil must lick his extra gain off, which makes him very angry. Then, to compensate his loss, he seeks other ways of tempting the human soul. Hence one almost always must be on the alert: to outweigh evil deeds with good ones. The prevalence of the evil ones, of the Devil's record over the Angel's, would be calamitous on Doomsday: the Devil would come with a wheel-barrow and take the soul to hell.

(Kolb 7, 24)

Thus, the cosmogonic dualism of God and Satan appears also on the level of everyday existence, in the differentiated human moral condition. In the eschatological perspective it consists in the identification of human posthumous existence with powers of good or evil. The soul comes to fulfil the moral-soteriological function as the advocate of salvation or damnation: it takes reward or punishment for its life on earth. This principle of individual retribution⁴ became very strongly imprinted in folk mentality. The theme of punishment in Hell and reward in Heaven belonged to central motifs in the teaching of the religious catechism already in the XIVth and XVth centuries, in connection with the dynamic development of sermonizing, mostly in the vernacular. The Christian conception of Doomsday justice has

been reinforced through centuries primarily by horrifying images of tortures in Hell designed for those who voluntarily yielded to the power of the Devil. He was for them a kind of *agent provocateur*, an independent destructive power.⁵

Psychomachia was thus determined by the ethical content of human life, by the choice of definite way of life, as exemplified by women of easy virtue:

each fallen woman – a girl, a married or divorced woman, a drunkard – may be made a witch in her old age by the proto-devil Lucifer. This happens when they renounce virtue and God: both to Lucifer (in writing) and publicly – facing the board of devils.

(ZWAK 14, 187)

The natural consequences of human actions acquired the theological significance of bringing a soul to the Last Judgement by one of the guides-intermediaries: the Guardian Angel or the Devil, executor of God's punishment for sins. Hence the great importance of sacrificial prayers – both canonical and non-canonical – in the scenario of daily etiquette. They were said in moments of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle especially dangerous for man, in phases of passage, especially before the nocturnal re-creation of life, when he was excluded from the safe realm of the community of the living (sleep as symbolic death or biological death at night, particularly disadvantageous, placing one permanently in a liminal position, transforming him into a roaming ghost)⁶ and awaited reaggregation to it with the coming of a new day. These magico-religious texts comprise a clear topical intention (inducing to appropriate action)⁷ addressed to the supernatural guide: guard my soul and my body and lead me to eternal life.⁸ Another belief holds that the soul must find its way to the Other World itself, as well as to overcome adversities on the way. In this case private prayers said before falling asleep (the change of the position of man's body from vertical to horizontal and the situation of magico-cultic inclusion isomorphic with *descensus ad inferos* or *regressus ad uterum*, prenatal or funerary symbolism – had unfavorable implications for the sleeping person)⁹ were expected to have the

magic power to open the gates of Paradise and close for ever the gates of Hell.¹⁰ This was to happen through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and other saints, especially patrons of good death: mainly Archangel Michael, St. Barbara and St. Christopher. Prayers to All Saints were believed to be indispensable, as a dead man's soul, before facing God on Doomsday, had to visit All Saints neglected in its lifetime to take reproach from them (*Wisła* 4, 99). Archangel Michael's patronage consisted in protection of departing souls against Satan; he weighed the souls on a balance on Doomsday. Mass to St. Barbara and St. Christopher has always been a part of Catholic liturgy.¹¹ They belonged to the so called Fourteen Saintly Helpers (there is a painting representing them in the Armenian chapel in Lwów [Lvov]). They were believed to be in God's good graces and, thus, able to help in most difficult circumstances. St. Barbara, the patron of the dying, was addressed in both hymns (e.g. Szpet Nab 18) and private prayers (e.g. *Wisła* 3, 599; Kot Znp passim).

The prayers to St. Barbara emphasized the possibility of her intercession, of guaranteeing the moribund a similar sacramental grace in the last moments of life – the same as she had received as the Holy Communion from angels in prison before her execution. These prayers were also believed to cement one's identification with a religious community, as evidenced by ethno-explication of the taboo of closing the door when a dead man's body was inside:

the doors should not be shut as long as there is a corpse in the house, because the soul goes to take advice from God and on the way it spends a night with St. Barbara. One who did not pray to her in his/her lifetime is not admitted by her: such person's soul sleeps at her threshold and then goes to God for the Last Judgment. Afterwards it re-enters its body and lives there, until a priest throws dust on the coffin. Then the soul goes to St. Peter and announces God's will to him: either this way (to Heaven) or that way (to Hell).

(*Wisła* 18, 346)

St. Christopher was worshipped as the patron saving one from an unexpected, sudden death (which deprives one of the possibility of fulfilling the indispensable *rite de passage* to the

community of the dead),¹² i.e. evil death¹³ – hence, nowadays, he is regarded by the Church as the patron saint of drivers. Iconographic attributes of these saints-mediators emphasize their roles, too: St. Barbara is typically painted as crowned, with a sword in her right hand and the cup with the Host in her left hand, against the background of a tower with three windows. And the patron of travellers, St. Christopher is represented as carrying the Infant Jesus on his strong shoulders and crossing a river full of currents and whirls.

The accomplishment of the passage on the eschatological stratum was directly expressed by prayers comprising figurative meanings: “what do you need, you sinful man? An easy death, salvation of the soul” (Kot Znp 109 and others). The first of these desires was of course very important for the moribund,¹⁴ but primarily it was a sign given to the community of the living, it constituted an unfailing testimony to the ethical content of his life. This fact played an important role in the entire social interrelationships based on permanent psychological face to face contact: it determined the quality of future commemorations. The reverse situation concerned a long human life – the longer it was the more it was filled with instances of grace. It was believed that “when one falls ill, his merits and sins are weighed in Heaven, and the verdict of death or life depends on what prevails” (*Wisła* 18, 106, 163). In view of Christian soteriological traditions, manifest in folk Catholicism, initiation into the state of eternal happiness, entering the Divine Kingdom, permanent contact with God’s face, was the principal human aim.¹⁵ This experience was to be achieved through soteriological practices which assumed synergistic character (through God’s grace), as well as in auto-soteriological manner: mainly through faith and good deeds. As a mystical-contemplative way to salvation was absent in folk mentality, actual intentions became dominant over virtual ones. Merely outward and superficial connection of these beliefs with Christian dogmas is pointed out in the ethnographic materials collected by W. J. Jaskłowski at the end of the XIXth century in the area of Jędrzejów (the region of Kielce):

their religious customs are marked with dead formalism; they emphasize mainly outward rites and practices, and ignore everything else. Regulations about fast-days, observing Sunday, everyday prayers are strictly fulfilled; transgressions against them are treated as deadly sins and occur rarer than other kinds of transgressions.

(*Wisła* 18, 78)

However, the folk conception of sin is very special – largely different from Christian morality. This is evidenced for example by the materials collected by C. Pietkiewicz in the region of Polesie (formerly in eastern Poland, at present in the borderland between Ukraine and Byelorussia). According to them, killing a bee or a stork was considered to be a sin as grave as that of killing a man. Each offence against objects of folk cult, each violation of taboo, was regarded as a sin: human everyday actions were regulated by etiquette.¹⁶

The didactic-moralizing attitude to life, as the basic soteriological practice, pertained mostly to the time of man's diurnal activity (according to a proverb: "one who sleeps, does not sin"), which, regulated by a system of orders and taboos, ensured order in the bright sphere of the world. Thus, anthropological moralism guaranteed the cosmic order, permanently exposed to destructive forces of chaos (evil). But another proverb – advising not to fall asleep lest you get robbed – points to the amorality of the realm of darkness (theft as a sign of these destructive activities). Their concentration took place during the rule of the prince of darkness, dangerous for an individual, since the power of darkness was synonymous with that of a devil. Desacralized nocturnal darkness was becoming a source of powerful fears. It was contrary to the diurnal light: a sign of divine presence, of the experience of light radically changing the subject's (man's) ontological status by transferring him to the world sanctified by hierophany. According to R. Cavendish, fear of the night was probably the oldest and the most popular human fear.¹⁷ It appertained to every form of human existence during the night: both the normal state of non-being, sleep (identified in folk mentality with death) and wakefulness – especially staying outside one's *orbis interior*. Such vigilance violated the absolute

taboo regulating fundamental life rhythms in terms of light and darkness: the periods of human activity and non-activity, of work and regeneration (re-creation). This is reflected in the tabooed orders to sleep during the hours of moonlight and to work during the hours of sunlight (Nkp 2, 279), but also: "one who walks at night, seeks trouble" (Nkp 2, 626, 2). A sense of threat in darkness, particularly difficult to fend off, was regarded by H. Owen as the pressure of some unknown, live matter.¹⁸ Darkness implies the unknown (death, danger), the realm of unsafe space and simultaneously the reversal of the normal, natural order of the world. Folk mentality did not demarcate a clear-cut boundary separating imagined fears from ghosts of the dead, phantoms, devils. They were evaluated equally pejoratively: merely apprehended – antropomorphized or zoomorphized (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 644). For centuries evil ghosts, witches, malicious creatures, supernatural beings, were believed to be particularly active and powerful at night, as darkness was the domain of evil. Also creatures which were naturally active at night and could see in the dark – such as cats, bats, owls – reversed the natural order and aroused anxiety. They were connected with the activity of the Devil, the Lord of darkness, and with the elementary decorum of a witch.¹⁹ It was believed that a devil (an evil ghost) was sitting in cat's eyes, as evidenced by the following myth:

when Noah was building his ark, the devil was curious of his purpose. When he finally learnt it from Noah's wife, he turned into a mouse and intended to bite its bottom in order to sink it. However, the hole was constantly mended. He finally got to the place where a cat sat. The cat caught and ate the mouse/devil: in this way the devil was entrapped in the cat's body and sits in his eyes.

(ZWAK 5, 138, 9)

Impure birds, perceived as creatures of mixed categories, contradicting the principles of the logical ordering of the world,²⁰ comprised especially nocturnal birds: owls and bats. E. Majewski states that various superstitions about bats were fancied most probably because

for uneducated people a bat is a mysterious creature: it is not a bird and flies at night. It also inhabits mysterious places, such as church towers and attics, caves and vaults. [...] As a flying nocturnal animal (our folk numbers it among birds), it acquired demonic symbolism. (Wisła 13, 6)

According to Polish folk etymology, a bat originated from a mouse which had eaten a blessed candle in church: he was punished for this with his front legs being changed into wings after seven years (*MAAE* 14, 52-3). In Polish and European folklore bats' demonic, grotesque "faces" were always portrayed as horrifying; they were identified with the souls of the restless dead. In folk imagination and in accordance with church iconography, Satan was portrayed with bats' wings, too.²¹ Bats and owls are presented unfavorably in *The Old Testament* which had enormous impact on the European mentality.²² Bats were generally believed to bring misfortune or death to a household. According to principles of homoeopathic magic, they might cause an abnormal state – confuse one's mind by getting entangled in one's hair,²³ or attack a shepherd sleeping bare-headed at night in the open air: "enter" his head and suck in his brain and bring him to death in three days (*ZWAK* 5, 151, 10).²⁴

The owl, another bird of ill fate and ill repute (*Wisła* 13, 612, 1) was regarded as half-devil and half-bird which had developed from a devil (*Wisła* 13, 615, 46) and therefore detests the light of day (*ZWAK* 14, 209). Another belief holds that a man who had eaten meat on a fast-day was punished by God with being transformed into an owl (*Wisła* 13, 613, 28c). Her hooting, resembling human articulation, treated as the devil's laughter, was ominous of death when she was trying to get into a house through its chimney, or was sitting on its roof, or was flying round the house. The proto-Slavonic word for owl (*strix noctua*) was *zowa* – i.e. a calling bird. Her repeated hooting²⁵ was interpreted as a summoning to the Other World (*ZWAK* 1, 104): it was understood as the onomatopoeic prophecy "come, come to a hole-grave close to church;"²⁶ according to a proverb, her hooting on a roof forebodes somebody's death (*Wisła* 13, 615, 69a). Nocturnal anxiety connected with this bird was enhanced

by its mysterious, noiseless flight and inclination to loneliness and ruins: liminal, destructured places, unassembled into new structures, remaining in the state of "betwixt and between," of uncertainty.²⁷

Terror of the night, arising from a feeling of lack of safety with the disappearance of light, with man's isolation (in a group he was self-assured), and with silence, was either subjective or objective (personal or social fears).²⁸ J. Boutonier calls it "fear in darkness:" subjective threat – the potential principal explanation of the human fear experienced at night, and "nocturnal objective threat" which, growing through centuries, led to filling the night with subjective dangers. In consequence of this, fear in darkness got transformed into intensive and general fear of darkness.²⁹ This process seems to be analogous to the mechanism of the creation of a *memorate* – a relation of experiences of an individual's liberated nocturnal imagination, and its subsequent transformation into a *fabulate* – commonly functioning in group communication as a tale recording folk beliefs. These tales deal both with meeting with dangerous demons and ways of defending oneself against them, and with contacts with God, saints and spirits. According to G. Ister, they prove peasants' subtle knowledge of the universe and their appropriate attitude to the surrounding reality.³⁰

This peculiar folk ontology was based on the conviction that all reality has substantial character and is permeated with psyche.³¹ The folk outlook provided indispensable remedies enabling people to overcome the fear of nocturnal phantoms; their materialization made them physically visible. According to D. Simonides, demons, spirits and horrors originate in the human subconscious ("when reason is asleep, monsters are awake"³²); they are created by man as impersonations of his dread to be suppressed. Named, localized and identified fear is not as dangerous as the unknown one. The awareness of mechanisms of its functioning helps to overcome, resist it.³³ Infinite folk prose texts (tales, especially tales recording folk beliefs and fairy-tales) express the belief that knowledge of one's enemy helps to worst him. Some of them are organized by

instructions, for example how to identify a witch among village womenfolk,³⁴ how to catch a nymph and make her serve and not harm man.³⁵ Naming a demon is also a way to recognize and domesticate him – in accordance with the conviction that to know the name of one's enemy is to get power over him.³⁶ Timid people are advised to call a demon's name, which causes its disappearance, as naming has a direct impact upon the named one – on the principle of a sympathetic relationship, magic imagery.³⁷ In the area of Olkusz (between Kraków and Upper Silesia in southern Poland) all outdoor evening horrors are named *bobak* or *boba*; and in the area of Kujawy (half-way between Łódź and Gdańsk) – *babok* (Kolb 3, 104).

The reduction of nocturnal danger is sometimes connected with the diminution of personified fear, and consequently, with trust in its weakened power to harm (*ZWAK* 11, 7; also 10, 324, 353). This tendency is exemplified by beliefs in the rule of local devils

settled in fields, at crossroads, in ravines or on tops of hills, etc. The borders of a village are the limit of their power. A devil would not visit neighboring villages, as other devils, his colleagues, rule there [...] A local devil who assumes animal shapes (those of a dog, a black ox, a bird, etc.) is generally called *Mamona*. This name also applies to a doomed man who, after death, obstructs people on the earth.

(Kolb 7, 40-1)

The nature of such “local devils” is explained by the following cosmogonic myth:

Lucifer the Prince of Darkness who struggled against the God of Light was hurled by him from heaven down to hell, along with 9 choirs of angels (who became evil spirits), in the shape of minute rain. Many drops of this devilish rain fell upon the earth, and evil spirits immediately appeared in the places they fell; they were forced to stay there until Doomsday. For this reason, local devils are bound to exist in every area, empty or inhabited, and in every village. They assume playful and delusive human or animal shapes and frighten people, play pranks on them, lead them astray, and frequently tempt them to evil.

(Kolb 7, 40)

In folk mentality the devil assumes a concrete shape and functions as autonomous evil. His principal task is to break established social rules, but he also frequently gets outwitted and exploited by man. Thus, he did not appear as a symbol of damnation and degradation as the Church portrayed him.³⁸

Numerous folk tales deal with uninvited, frightening, dangerous nocturnal hauntings by ghosts of the dead. They are treated as familiar phenomena, with didactic implications both for the living and for contacts of This World with the Other World. Inter-generational transmission passed various magic ways of disposing of an unsolicited guest. For example, when a drowned man's ghost visited his wife's house, "the widow warded him off by screening the kitchen range vent-hole with a pot, by putting scythes on the threshold and the window-sills and by incensing dung and *Anthylis vulneraria* inside her cottage; after all these actions the dead man's ghost ceased to come" (ZWAK 3, 93). Thus, a ghost was conjured away by means of symbolic actions of the magic of Alkmena – (of closing):³⁹ incensing with excrements and hurting herbage, applying an injuring iron object (the magic of iron).⁴⁰

Nocturnal darkness was also being domesticated through the symbolic (and real) broadening of a zone of light within it. In folk imagination light and darkness were much more real than symbolic, and evil ghosts were perceived as harmonized with darkness and afraid of light.⁴¹ They required phylacteries, which, with the development of processes of acculturation were supplied also by religion, treated as total hermeneutics focussed on the sacral myth, symbol and ritual.⁴² Magic texts-behaviors enacted in darkness (in the liminal phase, most dangerous for man) should be located between magic and religion. They had apotropaic properties – protecting mostly against the Devil's power, but also functioned as an expression of man's theological fear of God, when suddenly summoned to face him. The awareness of not being prepared for such a meeting, of failing to obey the rules of etiquette of the scenario of *ars bene moriendi* evoked panic and conceptions of future terrors, including those of being doomed to the power of eternal fire in Hell. According

to H. Webster, primitive mentality did not clearly discriminate between danger of the “impure” and danger of the holy. “Impure” and holy objects were equally endowed with mystical, magical power.⁴³ Thus, man was afraid of both God and the Devil, as both were not of This World and could determine his fate. But he was more afraid of the Devil whose domain was night – doubly alien to man. Religious archetypes, too, helped him to master this fear. The words of Psalm 91 – “Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; [...] *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness” (Ps 91, 5-6) – were treated as a magical verbal spell warding off the well-known fear. Confidence in God’s care is symbolized by the divine Logos – the mystical light illuminating the realm of darkness: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (J 1, 1). And Jesus said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (J 8, 12; see also J 9, 5). And we find in the epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians – “what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor 6, 14), and of John – “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (J 1, 4-5).

Strong belief in the irrational power of words understood substantially has existed for centuries in folk mentality: it enabled the suppressing of fear in darkness. Upon utterance of the formula “all souls praise God” even an encounter with an “impure” soul roaming about at night was less dangerous. And if the expiating soul’s response “and I praise him, too,” was followed by addressing her with the question “the soul, what do you need?,” her wish was fulfilled and she was brought to salvation. And if the ghost did not respond, one should cross oneself and pronounce another formula: “here is the Cross, adverse forces disperse,” which was directed to a damned soul with no hope of salvation (Kolb 17, 87). The power and dynamic substance of the “good word” altered the communal classification of a sinner by enabling his participation in Divine Nature, by mediating his passage to another mode of existence. This may be exemplified by the following tale about repentant souls:

In Bełz there is a bridge over Sołokija river. As one who was crossing it at midnight was always hit by a stone thrown by an unknown creature, nobody wanted to take such a risk. But once a councillor was crossing this bridge at night and was hit by a stone. He turned round and said: "You hit me, be in God's charge." And suddenly a shade emerged from below the bridge and said: "Thank you for your good word. So far everybody has been cursing at me, and it is you who put me under God's care." From that time on nobody has been haunted there.

(*Lud* 12, 250)

Thus, the predicate of frightening denoted a request for favorable intervention. It was also expressed in numerous reports on encounters with souls of the dead which, unchristened, remained in the state of permanent liminality. Their liberation was possible through naming⁴⁴ (see chapter VI). Nocturnal meetings within the communication between the living and the dead had their precise etiquette. Consequences of disobeying it are manifest in the following instructions: one who meets a demon on his way should say: "all souls praise God," to hear the response "and I praise him, too." If the demon speaks first, the man falls dead (*MAAE* 7, 10). Ritualization of nocturnal time created stability and safety both in the external reality (outside a house) and in the internal one (inside it) – largely due to primitive verbal magic based on the belief in the substantial character of words and strengthened by religious cult (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 301-2). Sacrificial non-canonical prayers for "good day" and "good night" were believed to be an efficient magic safeguard against evil (see chapter V). This was pointed out by C. Hernas's argument about a special role of verbal tranquillizers – indispensable for man to comprise both protection from unknown, mysterious dangers and a vision of diurnal order.⁴⁵

Thus, human diurnal and especially nocturnal imagination organized symbols which referred to the ultimate transcendence and its power of salvation and protection (expectations of divine direction during the day, and particularly at night). According to aetiological tales, the moon was created by God, too: it shines at night to defend people from various horrors. Hence the belief in

prayers "to the new moon which shines with reflected light, coming from heaven through a gate left ajar, when witches may freely practise their magic. All evil charms take place during the new moon and never during any other phase" (Kolb 7, 36). According to J. Frazer, these are magic rituals: extending a welcome to the new moon, which foretells growth, leads to the regeneration and strengthening of human life through the use of sympathetic magic.⁴⁶ On this level of cosmic organization of the world, too, the particular phases of the moon coincide with the opposition of light and darkness: light = the full moon, the Superior Realm, the good, life; and darkness = the new moon, the Inferior Realm, the evil, death⁴⁷ (the chthonic-aquatic nature of the moon was determined by its mythical creation).⁴⁸ The light of full moon is thus evaluated positively, becomes the good time.⁴⁹ It combines the lunar symbolism primarily with fertility, regeneration, immortality through metamorphosis – i.e. with the life of nature (vegetation) and of human beings: its influence upon the entire flora and women's physiological cycle.⁵⁰ Pale and delicate moonlight, passive, reflecting sunlight, was classified as feminine, whereas the solar activity, hot and heroic, was symbolically connected with the principle of masculinity.⁵¹ In terms of this opposition C. Lévi-Strauss interpreted the ritual functions in folk pharmacopoeia of nocturnal (feminine) plants (e.g. *Artemisia frigida*) used mainly for curing disorders of menstruation and in difficult cases of childbirth, and a set of diurnal, masculine yellow flowers used for example for curing disorders of the urinary tract.⁵²

The moon – the impersonation of femininity and passivity – subject to universal laws of becoming, birth and death, was associated in folk mentality, especially in the erotic imagination, with the realm of procreation, creation of life, inconstancy and uncertainty of a partner's feelings (permanently changeable, like the moon's shape). Sex as a remedy for nocturnal darkness evokes the equivalence of signs expressing potentiality: spirit (soul) – light – masculinity – sperm – life.⁵³ Ideological systems derived from the lunar rhythms combine and unite very different realities. Their structural symmetries and analogies to the lunar

rhythms may be grasped only by one's consciousness of the rules of this periodical process. From time immemorial, i.e. from the beginning of agrarian culture, the same symbolism combined the moon, waters, rain, fertility of women and animals, life of plants, human life after death, initiatory ceremonies. Unlike the sun, providing a sense of stability, the moon is subject to the universal law of becoming, birth and death; it never dies completely but always reappears. For *homo religiosus* this periodical transformation manifests the recurrence of life. The lunar rhythms always follow the sequence of creation, growth, decline and death. The perception of this eternal cycle of birth and death most probably led to crystallization of the conception of the alternation of life and death – the myth of periodical creation and destruction of the world.⁵⁴

Candlelight, too, is commonly believed to be apotropaic of the re-creation of life: it frequently accompanies nocturnal erotic experiences of heroes of folk songs. On the surface it acquires the utilitarian meaning of an index of temporality (of nocturnal measurement of time) represented in folklore as a metaphorical image of life:

[Death] led [a doctor] to a subterranean cave. He saw there [...] thousands, thousands of candles in countless rows: big, smaller, and very small ones. Time and again some of them were going out and others were lighted, so that their flames were flickering in constant change. Death said: they are the candles of people's lives. When a candle is lighted a human being is born, when it goes out – somebody dies.⁵⁵

The candle flame amalgamated all distinct components, forces of Nature:⁵⁶ on the cosmological level it denoted the potential of new creation. Therefore, largely owing to its purifying and apotropaic function against the power of a devil, the candle flame accompanied all principal *rites de passage* of the human life from the cradle to the grave: the birth, wedding ceremonies, the death. Liminal creatures, placed "betwixt and between," for example babies, were particularly exposed to such danger. According to East Carpathian (*Hucul*) mythology, "people

constantly keep the light on to ward off devils [...] But sometimes, alas, a light goes out or a candle is missing – and a soul perishes unnecessarily” (Mit huc 37). Candlelight was also a symbol of participation and initiation into Christian light, of grace, of Christ.⁵⁷ To be illuminated meant to be aware of the source of light, of the spiritual force. The magic, purifying power of fire and light kept away spirits of darkness, no evil creatures could enter the zone of light (see a strongly didactic tale entitled *Dziewczyna i zły* «A girl and an evil being» – *Wisła* 6, 857). However, some negative magic practices contradicted this religious principle by testifying to the ambivalent meaning of candlelight: for example it was used for wrong ends during nocturnal robberies – to keep the victims asleep in spite of noise and light. Preparation of this magic object used by thieves was based on the following magic principle: to catch a pregnant woman (at least in her 8th month), to slit her body alive and take the offspring out, to extract all its veinlets and make a candle from them. When it is lighted, no robbed person wakes up to see or hear anything (*Wisła* 18, 372).

Remedies for nocturnal darkness (ritualized verbal and non-verbal signs) enabled mastering it and restoration of the diurnal light. This was a manifestation of the duration of the cosmos, of the triumph of light and good over darkness and evil on the human plane, of transition from the state of nature, *communitas*, egalitarianism (in this nocturnal phase an individual is liberated from his/her position in a community) to the state of culture, governed by laws of social structure, with man's place and social roles being clearly determined by supraindividual values, norms and interests securing his safe existence (the diurnal phase). Thus, on the anthropocosmic level, it was possible to achieve a passage from homogeneity (the nocturnal darkness) to differentiation (the diurnal light),⁵⁸ and simultaneously, re-actualization of the myth of eternal return, of the mythical duration of the cosmos. Attempts at constant renewal of this rhythm lay at the foundations of folk ontology comprised in its principal explicatory systems: folkloric texts-behaviors con-

nected with Catholicism, traditional system of beliefs and folklore. These systems, both verbal and non-verbal, provided simple rules which enabled an individual to live in harmony with the surrounding reality, as its integral component.

NOTES

¹ R. Tomicki: "Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 47-97; R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism in the Slavic Cosmogonic Myth," in *Poland at the Tenth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, ed. M. Frankowska, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1978, p. 59-67.

² See for example beliefs concerning dreams: e.g. S. Polaczek: "Z podań i wierzeń ludowych zapisanych we wsi Rudawie pod Krakowem," *Wisła*, 1891, vol. 5, p. 631.

³ R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism in the Slavic Cosmogonic Myth...", p. 66.

⁴ M. Filipiak: "Aksjologiczne treści antropologii biblijnej," *Lud*, 1991, p. 16-22; see also S. A. Tokariew: *Pierwotne formy religii i ich rozwój*, trans. M. Nowaczyk, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1969, p. 187.

⁵ On medieval eschatological imagination see S. Bylina: *Człowiek i zaświaty. Wizje kar pośmiertnych w Polsce średniowiecznej*, Warszawa: Polska Akademia Nauk – "UNO," 1992, and substantial bibliography listed by the author.

⁶ L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 161.

⁷ See two theological kinds of intention: actual and virtual – T. Špidlik: "Łaska Boża a ludzkie współdziałanie," in T. Špidlik: *U źródeł światłości. Podręcznik życia chrześcijańskiego*, trans. J. Zychowicz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów, 1991, p. 47-8.

⁸ See folk non-canonical prayers for good night, collected by F. Kotula: *Znaki przeszłości. Odchodzące ślady zatrzymać w pamięci*, Introduction C. Hernas, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1976, *passim*.

⁹ See M. Eliade: *Aspects du mythe*, Paris: 1963, p. 102; M. Eliade: "L'initiation et le monde moderne," in M. Eliade: *Initiation. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions*, ed. C. J. Bleeker, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965, p. 3.

¹⁰ F. Kotula: *Znaki przeszłości...*, p. 111-12 and others; on symbolism of gate see e.g. D. Forstner: *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. and ed. W. Zakrzewska and others, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990, p. 383-6; A. Brzozowska-Krajka: "Symbolika podhalańskich weselnych bram (tradycja i współczesność)," *Tatrzański Orzeł (The Tatra Eagle)*, 1996, vol. 49, no. 1, p. 5-7.

¹¹ See *Nabożeństwo do czternastu Świętych Wspomożycieli*, ed. S. Szpetnar, Kraków: 1932.

¹² See L. Stomma: "Mit Alkmeny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 108; L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, p. 161.

¹³ See M. Włodarski: *Ars moriendi w literaturze polskiej XV i XVI w.*, Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy "Znak," 1987, p. 104; in folk mentality, an unnatural or sudden death was interpreted as God's punishment and people were afraid of such deceased (*Wisła* 4, 98).

¹⁴ M. Włodarski: *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ See S. G. Brandon: "The Significance of Time in Some Ancient Initiatory Rituals," in *Initiation*..., p. 48.

¹⁶ C. Pietkiewicz: "Kultura duchowa Polesia Rzeczyckiego," *Prace Etnologiczne*, 1938, no. 4, p. 86; see also W. Pawluczuk: *Światopogląd jednostki w warunkach rozpadu społeczności tradycyjnej*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972, p. 67-8.

¹⁷ R. Cavendish: *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975, p. 87.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁹ See the drawing by T. Ociepka entitled "a witch's kitchen:" she is surrounded by demoniac animals there – an owl sitting on her lap, a black dog standing on his hind legs, a raven, a black cat, a huge spider and a tortoise; only mice and bats are missing – *Lud*, 1938, p. 276.

²⁰ See M. Douglas: "Animals in Lele Religious Symbolism," *Africa*, 1957, vol. 27, p. 46-57, after J. Wasilewski: *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii*, Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1989, p. 25-6; see a list of "impure" birds there (p. 37) after Lev 11, 13-20 and Deu 14, 11-19.

²¹ See for example the painting from 1631 in the royal chapel of St. John Baptist Church in Kazimierz-on-Vistula which depicts a devil with bats' wings "for damned souls and those in purgatory."

²² See e.g. D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 247-8.

²³ See S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze. Wśród zamawiań i zaklęć*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1968, p. 123; K. Heckowa: *Pod znakiem świętego słońca. Dawne wierzenia śląskie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1963, p. 56.

²⁴ The punishment refers of course to violation of the taboo of covering the head; the myth explaining the origin of bats' devilish wings is also evoked here (*ZWAK* 5, 151, 3).

²⁵ On ritualistic repetition see A. B. Lord: "Właściwości literatury ustnej," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1990, no. 1, p. 284 and others; J. Bartmiński: "O rytualnej funkcji powtórzenia w folklorze. Przyczynek do poetyki sacrum," in *Sacrum w literaturze*, ed. J. Gotfryd and others, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1983, p. 257-66.

²⁶ This text refers to the time when the dead were buried in Poland in cemeteries around churches – i.e. till the second half of the XVIIIth century.

See J. Kolbuszewski: *Wiersze z cmentarza. O współczesnej epigrafice wierszowanej*, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1985, p. 20-3.

²⁷ V. Turner: "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in V. Turner: *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 93-111.

²⁸ J. Delumeau (*Strach w kulturze Zachodu*, trans. A. Szymanowski, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 26) clearly discriminates between fear and anxiety. He distinguishes spontaneous horrors – stable and cyclical (their social nature) – and rationalized ones (determined by individual sensitivity). See also the distinction between fear and anxiety in the philosophical writings of M. Heidegger: *Bycie i czas*, trans. and Introduction B. Baran, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1994, p. 478 and others.

²⁹ J. Boutonier: *Contribution a la psychologie et a la métaphysique de l'angoisse*, Paris: 1945, p. 134-46, quoted after J. Delumeau: *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³⁰ G. Ister: "Tiefenpsychologie und Sagenforschung," in *Probleme der Sagenforschung*, ed. L. Rörich, Freiburg: 1973, p. 159, quoted after D. Simonides: "Nobilitacja podania wierzeniowego jako przedmiotu badań," in *Śląskie miscellanea. Literatura – folklor*, ed. D. Simonides and J. Zaremba, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980, p. 81.

³¹ See W. Pawluczuk: *op. cit.*, p. 74.

³² This saying, probably by F. de Goya, was inscribed under the introductory drawing of the cycle *Kaprysy* [caprices] (1796-1798), see H. Markiewicz, A. Romanowski: *Skrzydlate słowa*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1990, p. 244, no. 184.

³³ D. Simonides: *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁴ See e.g. "Podania z Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego zebrane z lat 1885-1914," in *Podania i opowieści z Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego. Sto lat temu i dzisiaj*, ed. M. Czubala and D. Czubala, Katowice: 1984, p. 17; T 3040 Witches, see M. Federowski: *Lud okolic Żarek, Siewierza i Pilicy...*, Warszawa: E. Skiwski, 1888-1889, p. 264.

³⁵ See e.g. *Podania z południowej Nowotarszczyzny*, ed. J. Śliziński, Zakopane: Muzeum Tatrzańskie, 1987, nos. 77, 78.

³⁶ See A. Dietrich: *Mutter Erde*, Leipzig: 1903, p. 34; J. Negelein: "Bild, Spiegel und Schatten in Volksglauben," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1902, vol. 5, p. 35f; see peculiar role of the demon's (deity's) name in this magic formula, e.g. W. Wundt: *Völkerpsychologie. Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte*, vol. 3, Berlin: 1920, p. 110.

³⁷ See *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli, E. Hoffmann-Krayer, vol. 6, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987, p. 960-1.

³⁸ See A. Kasia: *Metamorfozy diabła*, Warszawa: Iskry, 1977, p. 10-14; W. Granat: *Osoba boska. Próba definicji*, Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 1961, p. 243.

³⁹ L. Stomma: "Mit Alkmeny...", p. 108.

⁴⁰ Slavic tribes regarded side-arms and fire-arms as effective apotropaic objects, see K. Heckowa: *op. cit.*, p. 101; see also extensive comments on the magic of iron in K. Moszyński: *Kultura ludowa Słowian*, vol. 2, part. 1, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1968, p. 316-21.

⁴¹ See "Light and Darkness in Religious Symbolism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. V. Fern, New York: 1945, p. 444.

⁴² See G. Dudley III: *Religion on Trial. Mircea Eliade and His Critics*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977, p. 81.

⁴³ H. Webster: "Periods of Abstinence at Sacred Time and Seasons," in H. Webster: "Rest Days: A Sociological Study," *The University Studies of the University of Nebraska*, vol. 11, January-April 1911, nos. 1-2, p. 34.

⁴⁴ See *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens...*, p. 951.

⁴⁵ C. Hernas: "Introduction," in F. Kotula: *op. cit.*, p. 18-19.

⁴⁶ See H. Webster: "Periods of Abstinence Connected with Lunar Phenomena," in H. Webster: *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁴⁷ M. Eliade: "The Moon and Its Mystique," in M. Eliade: *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. R. Sheed, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958, p. 183.

⁴⁸ J. Tomicka and R. Tomicki: *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1975, p. 127-8.

⁴⁹ See the entry "moon" in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. M. Leach, J. Fried, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1972, p. 748.

⁵⁰ See e.g. H. Webster: "Periods of Abstinence Connected with Lunar Phenomena...", p. 62-3; M. Eliade: "The Moon and Its Mystique...", p. 154.

⁵¹ See J. E. Circlot: *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. J. Sage, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 319.

⁵² C. Lévi-Strauss: *Myśl nieoswojona*, trans. A. Zajączkowski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969, p. 75-6.

⁵³ See M. Eliade: *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 3, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 279; M. Eliade: *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions. Essays in Comparative Religions*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976, p. 97.

⁵⁴ M. Eliade: "Time and Eternity in Indian Thought," in *Man and Time. Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, selected and trans. O. Froebe-Kapteyn, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957, p. 185.

⁵⁵ *Baśnie braci Grimm*, trans. E. Bielecka and M. Tarnowski, Afterword H. Kapelusz, vol. 1, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1989, p. 213 (T 332 the Crony-death).

⁵⁶ W. Kopaliński: *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990, p. 418.

⁵⁷ See B. J. Mullahy: "Light, Liturgical Use of," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington: 1967, vol. 8, p. 751-5.

⁵⁸ See V. Turner: "Liminality and Communitas," in V. Turner: *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago: Aloline, 1969, p. 97.

CHAPTER IV

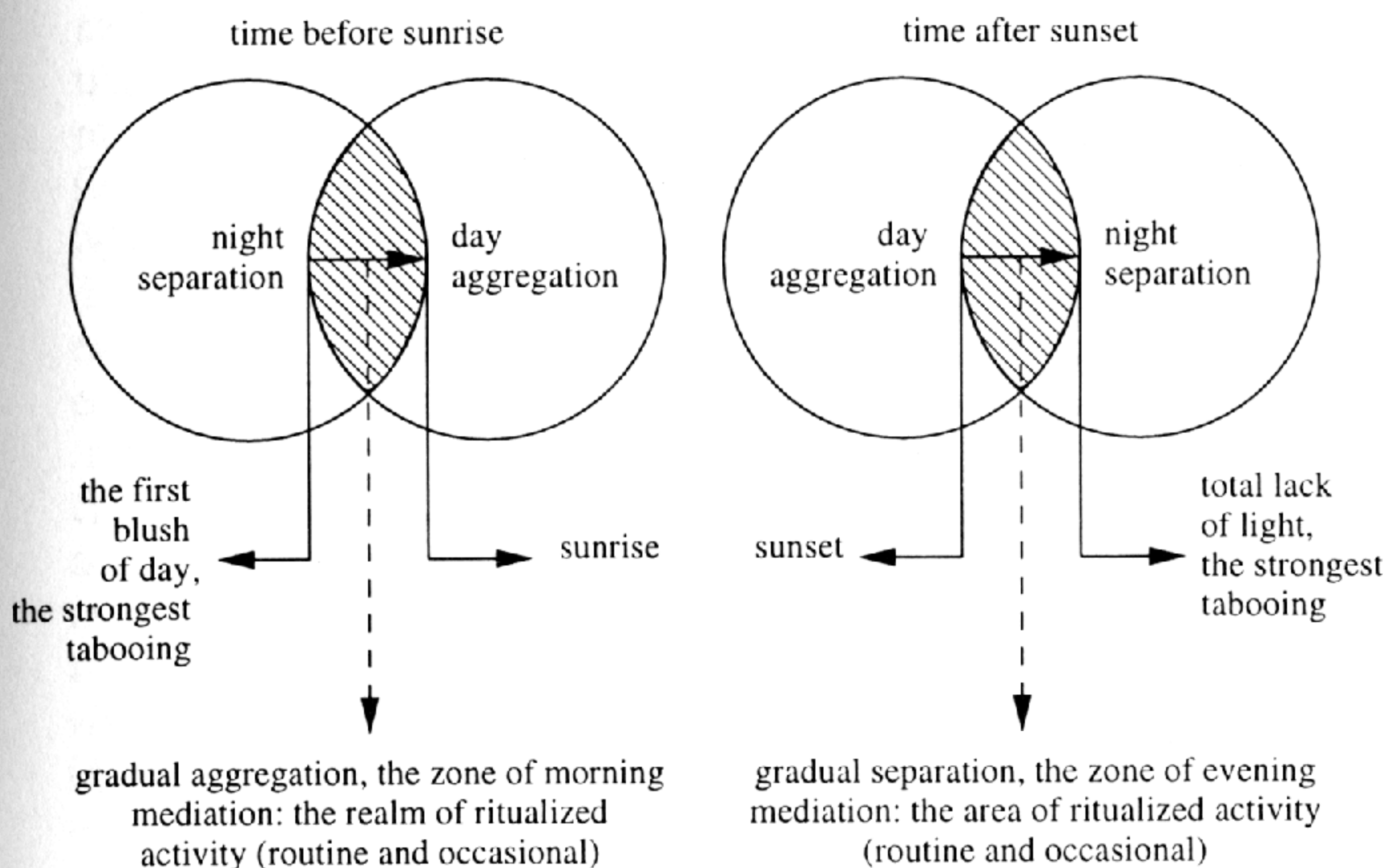
THE MAGIC OF A GOOD BEGINNING – THE MEDIATING STRUCTURE OF DAYBREAK

Temporal formulae of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, functioning commonly in various manifestations of folk imagination, strongly articulate both the central Day-Night opposition and its temporal thresholds. Their explication originates especially in the eschatological mystery of the time of beginning and end. Considerations of the problem of the categorization of time (crucial for folk symbolic imagination) within the framework of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle lead to distinguishing fundamental, profoundly value-imbued structures. These evaluations are based on elementary knowledge of the universe organized mainly by the principle of symmetry of man and nature. The law of harmonious coexistence, manifest on various levels of verbal and non-verbal folkloric communication, is most strongly expressed in time intervals of mediating positions in the diurnal-nocturnal *temps de passage*. Their boundaries are indicated by two mediators – daybreak and nightfall – displayed in behaviors and texts denominated by two key lexemes: morning (dawn) and evening (twilight). However, these time intervals are understood not as temporal points, but as non-homogeneous phases of varying degrees of symbolic density: in terms of transition from gradual increase of light to total darkness. Thus, the consecutive micro-phases of daybreak and of nightfall are interrelated in terms of simultaneity and create certain images characterized by the coexistence of light and darkness.¹

The folkloric consciousness of this non-homogeneity was preserved on the real (physical) stratum by the division of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle into smaller temporal units. In Slavic folklore they comprised the following micro-phases of dawn and twilight: the first blush of day (when the diurnal light gradually appears), daybreak, sunrise, morning, and respectively: before evening (when the diurnal light gradually disappears), sunset, nightfall, evening (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 131). This scheme of marking thresholds in the diurnal-nocturnal cycle is also evident in ethnic Polish folklore: for example in the area inhabited by *Mazurzy* around the lower Bug river north-east of Warszawa (Warsaw) (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 131).

Perception of these physical temporal points had its symbolic determinants encoded in various manifestations of folk outlook defined by domestic morning and evening rituals;² their folkloristic-ethnosophic reconstruction will constitute the subject of the present complex analysis. These rituals will be treated as cultural texts of a certain kind,³ as structures of largely codified events (according to actional, verbal, personal and object codes), equally important and taking place on a definite temporal-locative plane.⁴ It seems this type of research procedure enables the rendition of the interrelationship of a text and a ritual,⁵ the essence and methods of manifestation of a folk tradition, as well as to specify individual moments connected with its proper, i.e. folkloric, mythico-poetic side (behaviors and their rules).⁶ The vehicular function of these rituals is closely correlated with mediating, i.e. the ambivalent structure of the marginal times,⁷ entailing simultaneous affiliation to the diurnal and the nocturnal times.⁸

This situation is most clearly illustrated by Euler's diagram, presented here after E. Leach's publications:⁹ it portrays the transition from one status to another. The hatched area, common to both intersecting circles, corresponds to the realm defined by Turner as "betwixt and between."¹⁰ This diagram assumes the following shape when applied to the phases of daybreak and nightfall:



The presented phenomena have a processual nature: dawn consists in liminality and progressive aggregation, and twilight – in liminality and progressive separation. Thus, passage in the stage of daybreak constitutes a gradational transition from the state of immobilization, binding (night) to the state of activity, freeing (morning) – the transition marked with the magic of Alkmena + (of opening):¹¹ see the question “where does one look after getting up?,” and its answer “to the window” (Folf Pzl 285, 1293). In the stage of nightfall a symmetrical passage constitutes a gradual transition from the state of activity, freeing, to the state of immobilization, binding – marked with the magic of Alkmena – (of closing): this process is reflected for example in filling all holes and shutting doors and windows in all buildings after sunset (Nkp 2, 234, 31; *Wisła* 16, 692). In symbolic terms binding denoted one’s contamination with some impurity, from which consequently he had to be liberated through some purificatory ritual.¹² The zone of mediation depicted in the diagram represents the area of the clash of the antagonistic forces of darkness and light, Chaos and ordered Cosmos, the

Other World and This World, negative and positive qualities. Preservation of the universal harmony was possible through re-actualization of the myth of eternal return, which ensured an individual's safe existence. Hence the strongest tabooing of these temporal phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle which absolutely demanded (under the sanction of deadly sin – *MAAE* 1, 242) the following of a set of appropriate norms and magic safeguards. They were manifest on diverse strata: of an individual's plight and his household and farming activities, in communication between the microcosm of man and the microcosm of another man or a social group (tabooing functioning within a microcosm), and in communication between the microcosm of man or a social group and the macrocosm of nature.

Attempts at ensuring the universal order – the principal category organizing the system of meanings of the discussed times of mediation – were directly connected with the idea of reversible time, permanently returning to its starting point (see chapter I), of the temporal circle reactualized according to the fundamental pattern of the solar rhythm, combined, through Christianity, with the myth of Resurrected Christ. However, each re-creation of time, either in the diurnal-nocturnal micro-cycle (the phase of daybreak) or in the annual macro-cycle (the Christmas period, the winter solstice), required ritualized behaviors which gave symbolic meanings to ordinary actions, gestures and words to emphasize the importance of these crucial temporal boundaries. These behaviors enabled the magical establishment of the time of origins, the launching of sacral forces prolonging life, but also renewal, as the inevitable time of end implied the time of beginning. This ritualistic creation of the symbolic *continuum* of time was founded upon the conviction that the existence of the world was neither established nor given for good, but has to be permanently re-established through reference to the myth of the *Urzeit* and *Ursprung* and concrete regeneration of proto-events. According to G. van der Leeuw, the beginning comprises the potentiality of everything, as an embryo comprises the potentiality of all life. The creative proto-time of genesis determined the content and form of the

myth of origins, passed in inter-generational transmission. This time constitutes the creative source of all present events: it represents the initial establishment of laws functioning till the final time, it designs the reality delimited by the boundaries of beginning and end; “everything depends on the beginning which does not exist naturally. As soon as the beginning is at hand, everything can be repeated [...] There must be one who already exists in order to set time into motion.”¹³

At the basis of all manifestations of man’s morning activity there was a desire to make this time good, sacred, to transform its ambivalent axiology into unambiguously positive, to ensure (by means of verbal, somatic, etc. codes, sanctioned by tradition) re-aggregation to the community, a safe existence. This tendency was already reflected in the language formulae used to describe it: for example the Latin word *mane* – “morning” derives from *manus* – “good, nice,” the French *de bonne heure* means “in early morning” (literally: in good time); see also German *zu guter Zeit* and Russian *dobroje utro*.¹⁴ The present analytical procedure is dominated by highlighting the positive qualities of daybreak and nightfall: this was achieved by means of emic explication, of the reconstruction of symbolic images through the interiorized interpretation of folk psycho-social needs.¹⁵ Analysis of the folkloric-ethnographic material treating the morning time as the time of beginning confirmed the conviction that folkloric texts open perspectives onto culture,¹⁶ that their verbal and non-verbal messages comprise the *differentia specifica* of folk outlook regulating and explaining mainly the process of life. The lexeme “morning” is the index of temporality, whose extremely rich semantic content derives from its very frequent appearance in various manifestations of verbal and non-verbal folklore. This lexeme may be regarded as an entirely independent formula – the center of the semantic gravitation of denotations of the phase of dawn, reflecting a complex set of images referring to such parameters of tradition as language, myth, ritual and a magico-religious system of beliefs.¹⁷

The word “morning” frequently appears as a component of the complex formula “I will get up in the morning,” whose

semantic function consists in the permanent, even direct emphasis upon the dictate to get up early ("get up in the morning to work" – Kolb 10, 259, 101). This imperative functioned as a metonymy of the re-creation of life (see the self-directed curse: "let me not get up tomorrow morning" – Kolb 48, 318), but also as a co-determinant of the peasant ethos of extremely hard work. It is expressed for example in the playful folk song starting with the phrase "I am already over 16 years old," concerning the choice of a future husband: "I do not want to marry a peasant, as he gets up early // comes late from work, and does not allow me to sleep" (Kolb 18, 191). This ethos is also conveyed for example in a ritualistic wedding folk song, comprising a projection of the future marital life peculiar to the scenario of the liminal phase of this ritual:

Marynka, you should not think
 You will be always listening to music,
 You must work hard to earn your daily bread
 Get up early and get yourself ready for work
 Wake up inmates.

(Kolb 10, 259, 10)

The absolute necessity of beginning new diurnal activity early is also indicated in many other popular folk songs, for example:

Close your blue eyes and go to sleep,
 As you must get up early in the morning,
 In the morning, in the morning,
 Before the sun rises.

(*ZWAK* 2, 94, 123; see also 9, 187, 46; 17, 104, 352; *Kadł ZbO* 130)

This order precisely defined the temporal point of starting diurnal activity: just before the sunrise i.e. with the first blush of day. The appearance of the morning star, Venus – the first star,¹⁸ shining before sunrise on the horizon¹⁹ – gave the first impulse of light, predicting victory of the diurnal deity over the forces of darkness and cold. In Polish folk imagination Venus was viewed not as a definite celestial body but as two hipostases (of the morning and of the evening) differently named,²⁰ or as three

sisters²¹ – the lights of the marginal time, also ruling the transitory, liminal areas of the human world; apostrophes to them strengthened the power of the complex magic act. They were differentiated in temporal terms (of dawn – of evening – of midnight) and according to the psychic states under their power (cordial and hospitable – sad and dismal – suffering and mournful).²² In the symbolism of the liminal phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle special value is attached to the first blush of day (getting up at that time was equivalent with birth). In Lithuanian tales it is represented as a smile of the heavenly deity impersonated as the goddess of light, queen *Karalunia*.²³ In Polish and Slavic folklore the light of early dawn predicted the birth of the sun, her cult was of solar origin.²⁴ Having seen the morning star, people took off their headgear, prayed and greeted her (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 462). Manifestations of the pagan cult of this goddess of dawn light – re-creating life, bringing good to people – remained especially in magic acts and incantations. Later they were replaced by Christian divinities or subordinated to the Christian God: “morning stars, Christ’s servants” (*Wisła* 6, 465).²⁵ These incantations most often concerned aphrodisiac magic: for example those comprised in the record of the trial of D. Gnieczkowa in 1544 in the region of Poznań (in western Poland) – accused of witchcraft, sentenced and burnt alive:

Welcome the morning star. Go to Philip and break his heart, so that he can neither drink nor eat, is sexually attracted to neither girl nor widow nor to anybody else, except to *Lucyja*, etc.

(Kolb 15, 241; see also *Wisła* 1, 98)

The imperative nature of such formulas of magic communication, uttered with the morning Venus, testified to belief in the Uranian god’s force of intervention. Analogous beliefs may be traced in later prayers to the Christian pantheon.²⁶ This power was also transferred onto magic objects, for example aphrodisiacs: according to the principle of homoeopathic magic, the root of lovage (*Levisticum officinale*), dug out with the first light of day (when new life was being born) was also believed to cause the birth of love (*Wisła* 16, 798). The motif of the

Getting up with the first blush of day re-actualizes the paradigm of mythical beginnings, also through the imperative, thematic, metonymical formula of “getting up early in the morning.” The dictate of starting work early functions as a sign of the re-creation of life (conditioning inclusion into the realm of the living) and the regeneration of the divine creator’s mythical order, directly indicating the sequence of activities through the ritualization of routine practices. This imperative – ordering life and sanctioned by tradition – constituted a significant element of the folk way of life. The violation of canonical norms of coexistence frequently had moral consequences, too:

I would like to marry you, because I like you
But people blame you for not getting up early.
You are stupid, *Jasio*, do not listen to them,
I do get up early if somebody wakes me up.

(ZWAK 15, 76, 180)

A folk community preserved the continuity of its cultural tradition and its moral sanctions effectively prevented changes of traditional patterns:

I do not want you, *Kasia*, I do not want you,
Your unfriendly neighbors blame you
for not getting up early in the morning,
for not feeding your cattle,
for not waking up others
for not caring about your outward appearance.

I do not want you, *Kasia*, I do not want you.

(Kolb 4, 27, 154; 12, 131, 245)

Individual observations of this kind were confirmed by a local community’s objective observations:

He came to her early in the morning,
She was still lying naked in her bed,
Her hungry cows were mooing,
Her hungry swine were squealing,
Her spinning was not started.

(Kolb 18, 163, 285; see also ZWAK 9, 232, 179)

The logic and symbolism of getting up early referred to meanings inherent in the ambivalent nature of this act and designated social preventive censorship which led to petrification of the mythical pattern. Hence the phrase "She was still lying naked in her bed" denoted the natural state, unwelcome during the day, breaking the order of life. This order was also broken by the phrase "Her spinning was not started," denoting lack of magical opening, characteristic of the former state. In anthropological terms laziness and thriftlessness contradicted the principles of the general order of the universe. When displayed by a girl, they diminished her chances of getting married, as reflected in the following proverbs: "one who fails to spin well will not have a husband" or "a good spinner will not be short of shirts" (Nkp 2, 1099). Apart from the morning routine, animal husbandry, spinning, too, traditionally belonged to typical feminine occupations and was treated as obligatory in the morning (e.g. *ZWAK* 10, 132, 71). In D. Forstner's delineation of the realm of Christian symbolism one finds the claim that Old Christian stone sarcophagi (frequently richly ornamented with biblical scenes) represent the duty of work which god imposed upon the original man: Adam is carved to hold a bunch of corn (symbol of agricultural work) and Eve – to hold a lamb which alludes to the female duty of spinning.³² This idea is conveyed especially by short texts of folklore – riddles and numerous proverbs: for example "a distaff does not become a man, and a sword – a woman" (Nkp 2, 52; see also Folf Pzl 112, 433 and Skor Sf 1, 322). The appearance of this sign in the semantic field of "getting up early" imbues the morning marginal phase with profound symbolic meanings: spinning designates the transformation of Nature into Culture³³ (the passage from the phase of Night to the phase of Day), a distaff and a spindle belong to feminine symbols evoking the code of fertility,³⁴ movement and noise are peculiar to the phase of re-creation of life and the spinning-wheel is connected with solar symbolism by virtue of its circular shape (Ol Pieś 129) and circular-rotary motion in the same direction.³⁵ Spinning denotes the re-actualization of time by means of imitating the sun's movement – both rotary and

forward, directed to the future. The transformation of fibre into threads acquires the metaphorical-symbolic sense of spinning the thread of life, good fortune: “when one thread is broken everything is lost” (Nkp 2, 587; see also Rzes Ol 161, Kolb 18, 211); in ancient Greek and Roman mythology deities of fate were spinning the thread of man’s life and were cutting it at the moment of his death:³⁶ “to spin thin” means “to live in poverty, to be in critical circumstances, in poor health” (Skor Sf 1, 757; Kar Kryń Niedź Sjp 5, 16). The imperative of morning weaving remained in the sphere of imitative magic as well.³⁷ The regulation of spinning according to diurnal-nocturnal phases points to its close connection with the “fabric of time”³⁸ (a spider is considered to be the “first weaver”), to the magic projection of human fate. It was believed that wearing clothes spun in this way secured longevity and prosperity: see for instance “they spun early in the morning to have a free day [easy to live through] and a long life” (PES 236). The proto-ritualistic character of animal husbandry is also manifest in its Polish lexeme *obrządek*, whose basic meaning refers to external forms and ceremonies of religion, to a set of sacral activities aiming at ensuring indispensable order for man and the world.

In texts of folklore one finds direct indications of the sequence of these activities: in appropriately ritualized practices (oral and manual rites), in collections of ready patterns, fixed examples and rules constituting the realization of a fundamental model, and in formulaic expressions of a canonical idea.³⁹ The development of this idea may be traced also in other thematic formulae, connected with the basic formula of “getting up in the morning,” which point to ritualization of this temporal boundary as well:

I got up early in the morning,

I fetched water.

When I brought it

I was washing my white face.

I was washing my white face,

I was sitting behind the table:

My face was resting on my hand,

I was looking through the window...

(*Wisła* 18, 207)

The motif of washing, appearing in this passage, is a typical formula of waking up.⁴⁰ Day was the time of life and activity, whereas sleep – the time brought to a standstill, of symbolic death. Thus, signs of death were out of place in the time of life, lest they introduced danger and destroyed harmony. Hence the explicit imperative: “Wash yourself [...] in order not to be sleepy, to get up in time and not to sleep in the day-time” (*ZWAK* 5, 130, 7). An analogous order may be found in plentiful common songs, for example in *ZWAK* 15, 152, 34 or 9, 233, 184.

Such a formula of waking up is also known in the folklore of other Slavic peoples, as evidenced for example by the following Russian proverb: “One should get up early, wash and comb.”⁴¹ Combing represents creation from Chaos – as opposed to uncombed, tangled hair which denotes Chaos, mythical beginnings, exclusion from a community. Fulfilment of the obligation to wash and comb ensured aggregation.⁴² This imperative was an essential component of the liminal phase of all *rites de passage*,⁴³ and hence it was also inherent in the morning *temps de passage*. These actions – functioning on the levels of movements, communication and outlook⁴⁴ – were governed by the magic consciousness peculiar to primitive mentality. They formed totalities determined by syncretic consciousness.⁴⁵ This may be exemplified by the technique of washing recorded by S. Dąbrowska in the village Żabno in the region of Lublin (eastern Poland): “to take water into one’s mouth, then take it into one’s hands, and then wash the face and the hands” (*Wisła* 18, 93). It is confirmed by O. Kolberg’s observation from the area of Chełm (eastern Poland) – the regular way of peasants’ daily washing, resembling sprinkling, comprises the following sequence of actions: to take a mouthful of water, to bend forward and let it slowly down into one’s hands, then to rub and wash one’s face and hands until the water is completely used up (Kolb 33, 86). An alternative style of morning washing departed from the traditionally accepted norm and functioned in the realm of “black” magic: one who washes in the morning in a watering-can may cast an evil spell on somebody (*ZWAK* 16, 255, 27). Bewitching eyes, unwelcome in the mediating phase of dawn, were treated as

the source of all evil, even death. It was believed that one who does not wash after getting up in the morning or wipes his/her face after washing, will have such eyes for the whole day (*ZWAK* 10, 96-7). This negative state could be annihilated by addressing a magic formula to St. Otylia, the patron of the bewitched (*ZWAK* 9, 49).

When uttering such an incantation one should turn the flaps of one's clothes in all directions (movement, magic opening), clean an ill person and say the *Ave Maria*⁴⁶ (the variant of this magical verbal spell from the region of Kielce «in central Poland» emphasizes the role of spinning in bringing about such transformation – *ZWAK* 3, 56; see earlier considerations). One may venture the hypothesis that in the proto-form of this and related incantations a canonical prayer (invocation to the Virgin Mary) replaced an earlier cultic apostrophe to the morning Venus.

In the realm of “white” magic there was one more style of morning washing, strongly symbolic:

Lads call me beautiful,
And no wonder;
As I wash myself every day
In chilly garden dew.

(Kolb 18, 199, 365)

Beneficial properties of the morning dew,⁴⁷ manifest also in its curing powers (*Bieg Llp* 153), consisted in its special function in the mediating phase of daybreak. The dew was the first mediator between night (the Other World) and day (This World), an ambivalent sign of the liminal phase. By uniting an element of life (dew as water) with an element of death (the fixed epithet “cold” or “chilly” referring to imagery of death) the dew became a symbolic key opening a new day (the magic of Alkmena +). This is exemplified by the following riddle from the region of Żywiec (in southern Poland):

St. Ursula
Scattered keys,

The moon saw it,
But did not comment,
The sun rose,
And collected them all.

(*ZWAK* 17, 237, 352; 1, 125, 74)

Formulaic variants of this riddle – St. Ursula scattered pearls, beads (*ZWAK* 7, 80 and 83; 11, 22; 17, 237, 349-51; a beautiful girl lost her earrings – *ZWAK* 2, 182, 87) – express the function of dew as a talisman, significant for the morning time⁴⁸ (as it falls from the sky and glitters like pearls, diamonds and precious stones). It was a magic means ensuring wealth and happiness, represented in the examples evoked here as beauty, good crop, but also as antidotes and cures for lichens and other diseases – *MAAE* 6, 257; 9, 145 (the dew taken from windows, mediating objects themselves, before sunrise denoted double mediation).

Clearly the ritualistic nature of the activity of washing every morning derived from the principal traditional aquatic symbolism, whose multi-layered meanings permeated the folk subconscious and mentality. According to K. Moszyński, sprinkling with water was contained in the semantic field of practices transferring magic properties from one object, state, function, etc. onto another (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 269-70). The unsophisticated way of washing oneself by means of taking a mouthful of water (mediating symbolism of the mouth) was an ambivalent symbolic gesture of magical opening (the magic of Alkmena +), a kinetic sign of the re-creation of life. One's last breath passes through the mouth to stop the time of one's life; silence is the figurative meaning of taking a mouthful of water; the magic of silence is meant to facilitate or enable disclosure of a mystery (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 414); exclusion from communication caused by silence belongs to common metonymies of death. On the other hand, the contact of mouth with water as the source of life denoted symbolic rebirth, repetition of the anthropogonic act (see cosmogonic significance of aquatic symbolism), return to life after symbolic death (sleep). Contamination with death always required purification to enable passage to a new mode of existence, aggregation to the community of the living – hence the

appearance of purificatory rites, characteristic of the mediating phase of *temps de passage*. Ritualistic ablution, equivalent of purification, was known in all cultures of the world as denoting absence or renunciation of former relationships: it took place in every act of initiation, of establishing new ties, it was manifest in all instances of ritualistic sacrifice (contact with supernatural forces was indispensable to make a sacrificial gesture understood and accepted).⁴⁹ Such purification – aiming at strengthening good powers and eliminating evil ones – represented cathartic magic, too. These charms are to be found for example in oral gestures (prayers-incantations) and kinetic gestures of the morning (e.g. kindling a fire), which also have multi-layered magico-religious denotations.⁵⁰

In the phase of aggregation, impurity was becoming unfavorable for man and his environment, as it was destroying harmony and his safe existence. It was believed that if a shepherd did not wash in the morning, his cattle would gore in a pasture, and if he neglected his morning prayer – a cow would moo at him (*Wisła* 17, 144; *ZWAK* 5, 116, 172). According to J. S. Wasilewski, bodily impurity resulted in spiritual impurity:⁵¹ see the conviction that the devil has power over and knows the thoughts of one who leaves unwashed his house (Folk GŚ 256). The ritualistic function of the morning ablution is also evidenced by explicitly negative characteristics of one who neither washes himself nor prays – see a passage from a song of hunters of pests (foxes, martens and polecats) plaguing poultry breeders:

Have you seen here,
Or have you not seen here
Such an animal,
Which does not say a prayer?

(Kot Fso 233)

It was believed that one should wash every day, since God, having noticed a dirty person, calls such a creature not his (*Wisła* 17, 269), that those neither washing nor praying are considered to resemble animals (*MAAE* 4, 103). One neglecting prayers and washing for nine days and carrying a hen's egg under his arm was

regarded as forcing a devil to service (Bay Pow 124; *MAAE* 10, 48; *Lud* 7, 30). However, omission of prayers was socially approved (provided one washed in extraordinary circumstances) when one needed devilish cleverness, as for example before going mushrooming (*Lud* 1, 177). It was impossible to make a bonfire in a pasture and cows mooed if a single shepherd was unwashed or neglected his prayer (*Wisła* 17, 159, 144; *MAAE* 7, 57). The imperative to get up before the appearance of the sun, solarized God, above the horizon was also connected with one's everyday preparations for the encounter with saintliness. Closeness to the sacred time required non-contamination with dirt in both the physical and cultic sense, hence the proverbs: "One who does not wash will not be white" or "One who washes is whiter" (Nkp 2, 555, 2), referring to the symbolic meanings of purity of soul rather than of body. Hence priests' ablutions prior to their cultic practices, liturgical aspersions, ritualistic washing of a moribund's body before his/her passage to the Other World.⁵² Sprinkling oneself with water in the morning was also a kind of ritualistic ablution, according to the assumption that "the symbolic component of each natural water contributes to the sacramental meaning of holy water."⁵³

"Get up in the morning and worship God" (Kolb 19, 141, 444) was the next dictate determining the ritualization of the scenario of daily morning activities. Re-actualization of the time of beginning, emanation of the sacred (most intense at dawn) demanded a cultic attitude prior to setting the wheel of eternal return into motion – just in this particular marginal time, whose ambivalent nature required sacrifice and protection. Belief in man's power to interfere in the determinism of nature, to complement it or change its course,⁵⁴ constituted the foundation of the magic of daybreak, of the magical thinking intended to complement the objective order of the world, of including ritual elements into the chain of natural causes. This temporal point acquired significance essential for deep semantics of the formula of "morning:" it determined the time of sacralized, ritualistic preparations for the appearance of the life-giving divine sun, according to the primeval conviction that the sunrise, like other

atmospheric phenomena, is caused by symbolic ritualistic practices of worship. They were founded upon the conviction that their neglect might result in discontinuance of the beneficial consequences of these phenomena: for example the sun would cease to shine, unless people's daily endeavors "convinced" it to fulfilling its duties.⁵⁵ Ritualized morning behaviors acquired the function of periodically renewed sacrifice made to ensure the regular order of cosmos and the human world.⁵⁶ On the metaphysical level this sacrifice was revealed as expressing the relationship of a certain kind of reciprocity.

The imperative of getting up with the first sunrays (when their magic operates), at the point of contact of darkness with light, acquires symbolic sense especially in terms of peculiarly folk perception and experience of the morning phase as the pure, primordial and strong time of beginning. Safe passage from the realm of time brought to a standstill, devoid of qualities, from the stage of Nature to the stage of Culture, as well as creation of a new order, was viewed by folk magico-religious mentality as possible and effective exclusively in co-operation with supernatural forces, through sacrifice ensuring protection. Among the simplest and most primitive popular kinds of sacrifice there was one concerning first things – following the conviction that the first is always the best in each sphere of psychosocial behaviors and was the property not of man but of deity (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 245). According to folk ethos, comprising wisdom and experiences accumulated through centuries-long transmission, first things belonged to the new, life-giving light – peep of day and the rising sun, which was connected by Christianity with the cult of Jesus and the Virgin. A basic obligation imposed by the Catholic Church was, on having woken up, to devote to God the first thought, the first word and the first action – as first things are his due.⁵⁷ Verbal texts of folklore (collections of morning prayers), as well as the system of behaviors and beliefs recorded in ethnographic-folkloric sources from the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century, reveal gradual Christianization (albeit only formal – see comments on dead formalism) of traditional cults preserving their predominantly magic nature.

In the cult of both the former solar deity and of solarized God the prayer-worship was materialized in somatic and oral gestures.⁵⁸ The sign of the cross was the original gesture, expressing religious adoration and triggering off further prayer formulae. It was revealed to perform manifold functions in folk mentality: apotropaic, vegetative, codifying, initial and Passion.⁵⁹ They pertained to a human being in the phase of the morning re-creation of life, too. However, in its original form the sign of the cross was principally an expression of solar vitality.⁶⁰ Symbolic representation of the sun in the shape of a cross appeared in many primitive cultures. It was later transformed in processes of acculturation to appeal to primitive imagination by presenting God in concrete, anthropomorphic terms – these processes enriched the former solar cult and primitive philosophy of life with new meanings.⁶¹ Widespread use of the sign of cross in everyday behavior was ideologically (magically) motivated: it appeared in every situation of the threshold, in the time of beginning; it was an indispensable component of inceptive magic as conceived by primitive imagination. It becomes clearly manifest in the morning mediating phase, especially as the Christian Cross-gate

through which God finally became intrinsic in human history [...] Therefore we cross ourselves and say: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." These words invite God to enter. And we unite them with the sign of the cross, which is the way God comes into the human heart. And likewise he enters all man's work, thoughts and words, his whole life and the world....*Statut crux, dum volvitur orbis.*⁶²

Jesus said: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (J 10, 9). This symbolism of a door (from the epoch dominated by agriculture) derived from the times when the gate (enclosure, boundary strip of land, stone – every kind of border) denoted the entrance to Heaven.⁶³ Opening it, analogous to the mother's womb in childbirth, expressed rescue, birth – the motif widespread in the folklore of many nations⁶⁴ (in primitive imagination the sunrise denoted rebirth of the sun, followed by

its upwards entrance through the gate of Heaven; see also earlier comments on the imperative of getting up with the first sunrays). Daily morning sacrifice of first things was based on the conviction that salvation makes a profound analogy between the bloody sacrifice of the Cross (the Passion history: the mystery of the Resurrection) and the history of humanity: Christ's Crucifixion became the source of new life.⁶⁵

The cult of human Christ has flourished since the Middle Ages – his dead body, prostrated with pain and dripping blood, dead body revealing the mystery of the Cross. Medieval mysticism penetrated all circumstances of his martyrdom and death, physical and spiritual suffering to make him like common people, and his image – simple and close to them. Such an image got reflected in religious plays, lyrical poems, the fine arts.⁶⁶ The tendency to deep psychological penetration of the mystery of the Passion, characteristic of medieval Christianity, determined the model of piety (folk piety included) preserved until nowadays. Its repercussions have been clearly recorded in non-canonical matutinal prayers, appended to canonical ones. They are most often constructed upon sacrificial parallelism of the Cross and human fate: such texts, modelled upon the essence of liturgical prayer, refer directly to the Passion as typical and figurative evocation of the drama of salvation in the process of the individualization of religious life. But was this parallelism a matter of conscious worship of God? was the recitation of the myth of the Passion (based on biblical sources and apocryphal remnants connected with Jesus's earthly life) in conformity with the doctrine of the Church? What was the actual function of these texts in the morning ritual?

In matutinal private prayers, like in incantations and charms, the surface of Christian symbolism disguises supernatural images dominated by inceptive magic (of good beginning). This is evidenced for example by the following formulas of morning prayer from Polesie (formerly in eastern Poland, at present in the borderland between Ukraine and Byelorussia):

I thank God, the shining sun, the bright moon, the glittering stars [...] for letting me to sleep this night through. God willing, let the following

day bring me happiness, gaiety, profit and good health. In the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Dob Smol 661, 46)

The placement of folk private prayers in the same genre category as charms and incantations seems indisputable. Ethnographic-folkloric sources from the XIXth century testify that utterance of a magical formula was preceded by saying The Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria* and the Credo. A similar pattern applied in collections of matutinal prayers (Kot Znp 307), in which a spell was replaced with a definite family prayer. Instructions for its performance comprise a note to supplement it to the regular morning family prayer said in a singsong manner to ensure blessing (Kot Znp 318) – this was a magical formula whose extraordinary power was already translated into the language of religion (divine blessing). Some claim that prayer developed from magic verbal formulae, regarded as its germ by most West European scholars, following R. Marett.⁶⁷ Studies in Slavic pagan religion revealed the prayer to acquire public character, with certain magic actions performing the function of later Christian private prayer. Thus, Christian prayers made the magic redundant, though did not manage to eliminate it completely.⁶⁸ The essence of the spell and prayer was considered to be the same – i.e. consisting in man's attempts to influence the surrounding or supernatural world by means of the magic power of ritual language.⁶⁹ Already Pliny discussed *vis carmina* (*Historia Naturalis*, XXVII, 2, 10 sq) and Ovid claimed that words, too, have their power – *dietaque pondus habent* (*Fastorum libri* I, 192). A prayer formula was meant to liberate divine might.⁷⁰ Formulae of magic safeguard were treated as remnants of pagan prayers, used to entreat agricultural and domestic deities for help and protection (see folk medicine spells and formulas of magic communication as mysterious prayers – *Wisła* 7, 374; 10, 224; *ZWAK* 3, 5; 17, 18). An analogous function was performed by incantations addressed to deities of inferior demonology, e.g. a wolf:

And you saint Nicholas!
Take keys from the Paradise,
Close the mouth of a rabid dog,
Of a forest wolf.
And of all evil.

(Kot Znp 89 and 90)

Typical motifs of this spell are included in the prayer to St. Nicholas which concludes in the same way as medicine-men's verbal charms (Kot Znp 69).

The dominance of the magical type of outlook in the morning ritual (coexisting with the religious kind, without, however, the metaphysical-philosophical phase)⁷¹ is indicated primarily by verbal formulas, as the main element of magical consciousness, apart from objects and activities (a verbal text is only a part of a larger syncretic, ritualistic scenario, subordinated to a concrete situation).⁷² This consciousness is comprised in the symbolic-semantic function of the autonomous formula "morning" and developed formula "to get up in the morning," inherent also in matutinal prayers commencing with the phrases "The Sun rises on Sunday morning" (see e.g. *Wisla* 3, 594-5; *MAAE* 4, 139; *ZWAK* 4, 87, 6; 9, 50; *Lud* 33, 31-5; Kot Znp passim) and "saint Dorothy got up in the morning" (see e.g. *Wisla* 3, 599; *ZWAK* 4, 95, 19; Kot Znp passim). Both these kinds of texts evoke prototypical situations (the paradigm of the Passion and the Resurrection), associated with the ancient mythological motif of the road of life and the book of life, implying the apocalyptic vision of Doomsday – the book of "God's knowledge and human conscience"⁷³ at the outset of his life journey. They function analogously to the structure of charms and incantations: to their part I where evocation of a mythical tale aims at transferring God's power of intervention onto the wizard (the function of warning); and to part II – the most essential, guaranteeing the positive effect of such action (a happy day, devoid of temptations and sin), which amounts to the magic opening of the gates of Paradise and the closing of the gates of Hell. This is frequently supplemented by their part III – evoking the authority of God ("This is not my might // This is Jesus

Christ's might // Jesus Christ. Amen" – Kot Znp 418) or Saint Mary ("This is not my might // This is the Holiest Virgin's might!" – Kot Znp 69). In witch-doctors' charms the last component assumes the shape of formulas of magical explication, whereas in private prayers the motif of Creation in the cosmogonic formula "through God's might" highlights the source of the original creative force operating till twilight. Nightfall required ritualistic repetition of the scenario of magical actions – to enable continuation of the fundamental life-death-life cycle, preservation of the universal rhythm and duration of time. The morning re-creation of time, as expressed in private prayers, meant to charm the time of beginning initiating the entire day and assumed the typical form of recitation of myth (the magic of the myths of cosmogony and the Passion). The nature of matutinal prayer as a magical verbal spell ("sacrifice of the lips") results from the ambivalent character of hierophany, revelation of saintliness as a mysterious force which may produce both desired and harmful results, of particular significance in the time of beginning. Sacralization of this time, contact with holiness, functions as a means to accomplish concrete, immediate objectives, and holiness, expressed in its Christian symbols, is treated as the irrational force meant to achieve these aims.

Daily re-creation of the time of beginning required also the ritualistic sacrifice of fire (connected with a special, magical meaning of the phase of daybreak) – another principal sign of renewal of life. The morning lighting of a fire denoted merely its rebirth from the state of nocturnal "sleep" as embers covered with ashes, and throwing wood (symbolism of the tree of life) into the fire was like feeding it – the simplest kind of offering made by man to this element.⁷⁴ F. M. Müller's explorations of primitive cultures portray the primeval man as bewildered mostly by the fierce mobility and sprightliness of fire, to call it "alive *agnis, agile, ignis*."⁷⁵ According to the folkloric morning scenario, "A peasant couple get up before the sunrise all the year round [...] and she kindles fire in her kitchen-range to put there pots and kettles with water" (ZWAK 14, 154). Like other components of the matutinal ritual, discussed earlier, the first,

morning lighting of the fire communicated in pragmatic terms primarily symbolic meanings of the magic of good beginning, which comprised observable interactions of the microcosm (man) and the macrocosm (nature), as well as of the microcosm (man) and the microcosm (a social group). Earthly (home) fire – reflection of the sun, the heavenly fire, the great life-giver – assumed the function of a substitute sacrifice, stimulating the solar force through sympathetic magic practices. Kindling fire denoted its birth – given to it by a woman, mother, whose traditional role was to tend the hearth in both the real and figurative sense; some myths also connect fire with female fertility.⁷⁶ Feminine personifications of the hearth have been preserved in ancient cults (Hestia in Greece, Vesta in Rome), which were however dominated by the patriarchal principle and the resultant ancestor worship.⁷⁷

Naming fire functions, too, as a sign of its birth. In folklore materials collected by S. Udziela in the area of Ropczyce (in south-eastern Poland), fire is called *Zygmunt* (*Sigismundus*): one who gets up in the morning and lights fire should cross it and welcome it saying *Witajże Zygmuncie* (*ZWAK* 10, 114).⁷⁸ This simple formula of communication reflects the magic evocation of life, as well as the archaic desire to shape people's relations with their natural environment in personal terms. It names the life-giving element to include it into the community and to emphasize its mediating properties. According to the Bible, naming means creation, bringing to new existence (Rev 2, 17), one who does not have a name, is not born yet:⁷⁹ see the riddle "Without what a man does not exist? – without a name" (*Lud* 17, 82). Fire was named *Zygmunt* in Galicia, in the Austrian-occupied part of Poland – i.e. in the sphere of influence of the German language. Basic cultural connotations of this name are implied here: it sounded unfamiliar among Slavic names (which was essential for the magic);⁸⁰ its Old-High-German etymology (*sign* – victory, *mund* – protection) makes its name masculine, coinciding with the first syllable of the name *Zygfryd*, denoting a victorious guardian.⁸¹ The connection of this German sounding name with the fear of fire is also probable (in Polish folk

culture Germans were identified with evil, devilish forces⁸²). Greeting it in the morning was meant to bring it under control and liberate only its positive qualities.⁸³ In the Catholic religion St. Sigismundus was made the patron of the period preceding a new harvest: the mediating phase in the *temps de passage* of the annual cycle. This was the most difficult time to survive for poor peasants – as reflected for example in the following proverb: “On St. Sigismundus’s day (2 May) pick grains from your corners” (Nkp 3, 926).

Like water, fire was a symbol of substitute sacrifice; it also assumed the role of a logically ambivalent sign of cathartic function. It is supposed that the daily matutinal ritual of the sacred fire, conditioning the appearance of the sun, was preserved, in its developed form only once a year, during the summer solstice; albeit the unit of time changed, the ritual itself remained as the framework of temporal structure.⁸⁴ Thus, the ambivalence of the morning fire does not become distinct until in the perspective of the isomorphism of the structure of daily ritual and annual cycle. This happens on Midsummer day, the time of the sun’s utmost maturity, the principal feast of the solar cult – when fire functions as a substitute of the sun’s son sent to earth and is a kind of homage paid to the Father (with the participation of his Son).⁸⁵ The appearance of two contradictory elements – fire and water – in the morning mediating phase was *sine qua non* for the existence of life (see the shortest Russian version of the cosmogonic myth mentioned in chapter II: the world originated from *tsar* fire and *tsarina* water). In this act the sacred principle revealed its power and the temporal signal of sunlight finally documented existence of the mythical model set by the creation of the world. In XIXth century folklore materials dealing with the ritual of the morning home fire (as well as with the evening ritual fire), there are only relics of the former cultic attitude preserved under the external, most often Christianized surface. This process of the Christianization of manifestations of pagan worship most often assumed the form of patronage of selected saints (in this case e.g. St. Laurence, St. John the Baptist, St. Agatha) and connected the pre-Christian fire cult with the paschal-resurrectional symbolism of Easter Saturday.⁸⁶

An explicit purificatory aspect of the matutinal mediating phase is inherent in the scheme of diurnal order sanctioned by tradition: "After the morning prayer there is time to lay the table for breakfast [...] to make beds, to tidy and sweep the room" (*ZWAK* 10, 102), and sweeping was always to be made from the eastern side (the great altar faces it) – making it the other way round would bring misfortune (*ZWAK* 10, 91, 117). And again, the practical significance of these actions in man's closest environment (the order to clean up the house in the morning) coexists with their symbolic sense – the magic ritual of removing litter (see ritual ablutions before daybreak) and the symbolic creation of a good day (in folklore rubbish and excrements denote wealth, gold⁸⁷). Sweeping and spinning (discussed before) comprise elements of rotary motion and should be perceived also in terms of solarism, imitative magic; see for example the following riddle:

What housekeeper tidies up every day
And visits each corner in the morning.

[broom] (*Folf Pzl* 102, 374; see also 268, 1217)

Physical purity conditions approaching ritual purity,⁸⁸ tidying up in the morning marginal phase becomes a sign of passage from Chaos to Order, from the natural, disordered (and impure – the status of the profane) to the stratum of Culture (order, harmony as divine attributes), of the re-creation of the hierarchical and structured Cosmos. And the absolute taboo of cleaning up, setting things in order, washing and combing, appears in the evening stage to express a desire to restore the initial state of Chaos.⁸⁹

The daily morning meal, consisting principally of corn food, should be understood in terms of sacrificial gift, too: "before leaving for work in the fields peasants eat only bread at home, and around 8 or 9 a.m. their wives or children bring them a cooked breakfast there (consisting mainly of borscht, noodles, cabbage, bean and potatoes – *ZWAK* 14, 155). Corn and bread were originally used as an offering primarily in the worship of the sun – a relic of this is preserved for example in the magic formula

uttered during baking bread: "Grow bread, like the sun in the sky" (*Wisła* 3, 495). Making the sign of the cross on bread prior to baking it supposedly strengthened the solar, sacrificial nature of this ritual. Bread was a synonym of the supreme value of life, the most basic and common component of food since the end of the XIXth century. According to I. Kubiak and K. Kubiak, it functioned as a kind of daily Communion which should not be consumed without special preparation: touching it with a dirty hand and especially eating it by an unwashed person were regarded as sinful.⁹⁰ The alimentary taboo was simultaneously interpreted in Christian categories of sin, the religious sanction originating in the magic; such taboo clearly transformed prohibition into obligation. The primordial solar magic of bread, of the first matutinal meal, was reinforced by the Christian mysticism of bread (food). Daily bread, gift of earth, becomes a sign of sacrifice which Christ the Lord of Day makes of Himself.⁹¹ In the Eucharist ordinary food transforms into holy bread which spiritualizes its consumers, constitutes the sacrament of divine presence:⁹² "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (J 6, 51). The mystery of the bread of life becomes particularly significant in the phase of the morning re-creation of life, when communion with irrational forces (God) was to ensure their (his) grace for the entire day. The logic of ritual of early rising is very conspicuous here. Its mediating context comprises the liminal matter, bread – the symbolic spatio-temporal mediator between the realms of Devil, People and God⁹³ and the fundamental symbol of prosperity in the time of beginning, a principal sign of inceptive magic.

The magic of matutinal *temps de passage* is immanent also in the system of other non-verbal actions contained in the semantic field of the formula of "getting up in the morning." The morning, i.e. the beginning, determined the course of the whole day: "One is till the evening what one is like in the morning" (Nkp 3, 21; see also 3, 22; *Wisła* 16, 692-3). As it has been noticed before, strong tabooing of this mediating phase aimed at the preservation of the mythical model of beginning. Hence great

significance was attributed to the secret communication of the Other World with This World, of cosmos and mankind, crucial for the stage of daybreak: the omens of this communication were regarded as *signa oblativa*, natural omens handed over to men by gods of their own free will. This was a peculiar “recipe for life,” “knowledge” passed in inter-generational transmission, its incomprehension evoked pejorative evaluation by the milieu (amounting to considering such person stupid – *Wisla* 15, 256). It was generally believed that violation of the natural order (by reversing it or by introducing an alien element) of this special time of beginning was an ill omen (*Wisla* 14, 56). Inversion, the world turned upside down, belonged to the realm of death, to the Other World. Already the first movement, the way of getting up in the morning was ominous and loaded with taboo: one who is in a bad temper early in the day, who is fastidious all day long, or for whom the whole day is unlucky, is said to have got out of bed on the wrong side (*MAAE* 15, 12, 43; *Wisla* 11, 247-8; *ZWAK* 14, 196), or with his buttocks upward (*MAAE* 6, 250; *Wisla* 14, 56; *ZWAK* 13, 69; 14, 196) – buttocks were regarded as a devil’s rear face (*Lud* 37, 306), hence their pejorative connotations in reference to people. Leaving the house one should not cross its threshold with the left leg, as this was supposed to bring misfortune (*MAAE* 6, 250; *ZWAK* 10, 75; 14, 196).

The axiology of dichotomic concepts set in a series of binary oppositions – left/right, happiness/unhappiness, good/evil, front/rear, up/down – is very conspicuous in the perspective of cosmogonic myth as universal aetiology.⁹⁴ Positively evaluated reversed order (approved inversion) appeared in complex magic acts: e.g. “to prevent toothache for good, one should put on his left shoe first in the morning and should take off his right shoe first in the evening” (*ZWAK* 3, «18», 46). Putting shoes on, returning to new activity could be accompanied by signs favorable or unfavorable to man. Sneezing belonged to the second group, already in the XVth century it was looked upon as an ill omen; it was regarded as connected with a soul’s departure from its body – see the proverb: “the soul sneezes, everything gets silenced” (*Lud* 9, 372). Sneezing was also originally

explained as caused by the activity of supernatural forces leaving the human body. Depending on viewing this spirit as either evil or good, ill luck or good luck was attributed to a sneezing person. The ambivalent nature of this action was unfavorable in the marginal time – hence “white” magic consisted in returning to the original state, getting back to bed and starting to get up again (*Wisła* 11, 249). The first glance was also supposed to be meaningful: one who looked at his/her nails immediately after leaving the bed would not get bewitched (*ZWAK* 16, 255; Kolb 15, 19). Their apotropaic power derived from their protective properties (both magic and real) – see the myth about the development of nails from hooves (*Mit huc* 19); the Old Polish word for “nails” denoted also “claws.”⁹⁵ B. A. Uspieński connected them with the cult of *Wolos* (Slavic god of agriculture and cattle) and emphasized the parallelism of hair and nails and the vital energy inherent in them.⁹⁶ In order to protect oneself for a whole day from bewitching eyes one should get up and spit thrice at the lower part of a woman’s shirt (*nadolek*) and rub one’s forehead thrice against it (*ZWAK* 16, 256). Spitting was a common apotropaic object against sorcery, spitting and spittle were meant to ward off evil spirits – see the saying “Spit upon a ghost.” These actions were accompanied with appropriate verbal formulae – for example “transfer evil charms upon a dog” (*na psa uroki*) or “transfer consumption upon a cat” (*na kota suchoty*): when repeated thrice they averted all adversity (*Bieg Llp* 245). Departures from the matutinal natural order, of negative consequences for the whole day, were also reflected in ornithomancy founded upon the conviction that birds come from the Other World and transmit God’s will – see for example the ominous behavior of domestic birds: hen-crow in the morning forebodes disaster for that day (Kolb 8, 268, 624; *ZWAK* 10, 102). Prophetic properties were attributed especially to birds and animals coexisting with man temporarily or permanently.

In the mediating morning phase signs directly preceding aggregation (inclusion into a community through starting work) acquired particular importance for the favorable course of the

entire day; they were frequently classified by XIXth century collectors of folklore as agricultural or occasional superstitions developing the magic of first things. Ill luck for the whole day was brought for example when a pregnant woman or a woman with empty watering-cans was the first person met in the morning (*Wisła* 3, 860-3). In this example pregnancy functioned as a mediating state,⁹⁷ road – as mediating space, and morning – as mediating time, and the opposition empty/full (superstition widespread also among Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Bulgarians and Germans), significant for this phase of diurnal time, contributed to the expression of this idea, too. The intensity of mediating elements in the morning phase strengthened its negative value, whereas the magic of good beginning required mainly positive signs, re-creating life. Meeting a Jew as the first person in the morning was a good omen, a favorable sign (*ZWAK* 11, 32, 20): his mediating nature derived from the role of the alien in folk mentality (Gypsies and Germans were treated in a similar way). A Jew was regarded as allied with supernatural forces (*Nkp* 3, 988, 228), with the Other World – by being a clever trader, outside agriculture (see the saying: “a Jew neither ploughs, nor sows, and yet threshes and prospers” – *Wisła* 12, 768), speaking a different language and practising a different religion (if somebody sat to breakfast without prayer he was addressed as “you Jew, have you said your prayer!” – *MAAE* 4, 103). The dependence of Jew-the stranger on the Other World was manifest in numerous apotropaic superstitions, for example in wearing a talisman (a piece of paper with a text written in Jewish) protecting from illness (*Bieg Llp* 20).

The magic of good beginning includes ritualized human matutinal behaviors which are dialogical formulas of communication on the diurnal threshold functioning clearly as rules of etiquette. The folk etiquette of meeting, especially of the morning social interactions, comprised definite stereotypes of etiquette of verbal and non-verbal communication, both obligatory and facultative.⁹⁸ In their historical development there was a shift in dominance from obligatory forms (in the oldest layers of tradition) to facultative ones. In a reduced form they

have survived until the present times as conventional signs of etiquette of the first diurnal meeting. Folk proverbs claim: where two people greet each other in the name of God, he is the third (Nkp 1, 161, 190); somebody's sincere "good morning" may bring you good luck for the whole day (*Wisła* 8, 794, 1305). Belief in the power of verbal wishes (as well as curses) originated in the primitive natural outlook, fused later with Christian myths. It was of particular importance in the morning phase, whose ambivalence was intended to be made clearly explicit. In man's contacts with a social group this time generated a natural situation of performance,⁹⁹ a specific act of folkloric reciprocal symbolic communication by means of verbal etiquette used just in this situational context.¹⁰⁰ Competence of communication¹⁰¹ enabled selection of its forms and variants appropriate for a given social situation. W. W. Pleszakowa distinguishes them as a distinct genre of verbal folklore – wishes of good luck (*blagopożelanija*): they had tremendous illocutionary force and ritualistic origins.¹⁰² According to the diurnal scenario, one who goes to work in the fields in the morning should salute those already working there and admire their early start: thus, the earlier one begins to work, the more good wishes are addressed to him/her and consequently, the happier he/she will be (*MAAE* 4, 106). This context makes obvious the meaning of the common basic formula of early rising: one who gets up early in the morning, is rewarded by God (*ZWAK* 11, 69, 14). A harvest greeting is remarkable among formulas of morning verbal etiquette preserved in ethnographic-folkloric sources – it had two stylistic variants differentiated according to the gender: *scęść Boze* for men and *dej Boze scęście* for women, both expressing a plea to God for happiness, with the uniform response *Dej Boze* strengthening this request (*MAAE* 4, 106). This Christianized greeting, closing the morning dialogical communication, bears clear traces of the solar proto-myth and refers to *Dadźbóg*, the principal Slavic god – of the sun and fire – the source of prosperity and wealth, i.e. of the principal values in folk axiology.¹⁰³

According to A. K. Bajburin and A. L. Toporkow, the essence

of this act of communication in traditional culture derived from its personified (*rolewoj*) structure.¹⁰⁴ Man has always been aware of supernatural forces active around him and has tried to diminish their unfavorable impact by means of appropriately shaped rituals and situational etiquette. In many customs one of the partners of the act of communication represents God or ancestors, which makes his folkloric verbal texts and texts-behaviors come not from himself but from these superior forces. This idea, expressed in the formulae of matutinal greeting, applies to another kind of situation of communication as well: including, apart from man, a personified object participating in the act of communication (a peculiar “total anthropomorphism of nature” takes place here¹⁰⁵). In this way and under these particular circumstances, norms of etiquette may be obeyed not only in relation to another man, but also earth, its prospective crop and the house left in the morning by a peasant going to work in the fields.¹⁰⁶

This etiquette of initial contacts presupposed the continuation of conventional facultative dialogue and strong ethical and social intentionality: for example “Be healthy, do not fall ill, // And buy everything you lack” (*MAAE* 4, 106). This verbal etiquette was a magic safeguard against undesirable phenomena. It had special grammar which both strengthened its magic impact and distinguished it from utterances in everyday language. The shift of emphasis from referentiality (denoting designates) of this verbal etiquette to its artistic function took place on the supragrammatical level of text organization, mainly through means of poetic expression typical of ethnopoetics of the folk song – rhythm, rhyme, repetition, enumeration – combined with the ritualistic character of such a message. The artistic organization of formulas of communication (first greetings) mediated in the creation of a new reality: ritualized verbal signs of this kind were indispensable especially in the time of beginning which regenerated the mythical ordering of the world. The level of language expression was inseparable from the level of its impact, which constituted the foundation of verbal magic, of belief in the real effect of words¹⁰⁷ – connecting, through

sound and rhythm, with the four elements distinguished in ancient philosophy. Hence a definite vibration of the air might surprisingly wake up relevant forces and a human relationship with them might bring either positive or negative results, depending on circumstances.¹⁰⁸

Apart from ritualized routine actions periodically renewed (discussed heretofore), the semantic field of the developed formula "to get up in the morning" comprised also ritualized occasional actions. The ambivalent nature of the mediating phase of daybreak created favorable conditions for them to take place. These actions were mostly connected with folk-medicine which originally belonged to the sphere of ritual¹⁰⁹ (gathering magic plants, preparing cures from them, treating diseases with them). The peculiar magic power of this time – both endangering human health and life and enabling one to cure an illness – was indicated for instance by A. Paluch.¹¹⁰ His statistics of witch-doctoring point to 44% of instances being connected with the morning time, and 39% – with the evening time. For both rational and magical reasons the early morning, time before sunrise was most appropriate for curing with medicinal plants: for example it was believed that exposure to the sun diminishes the healing properties of medicinal herbs, that those collected with the morning dew, before the growth of light, were the most effective, whereas those collected with the disappearance of light were harmful (Bieg Lp 27).¹¹¹ The special magic significance of matutinal time for divination, weather forecasts, witch-doctoring, etc., was grounded on the conception of close communication between the universe and man as its element. These hierophanic seconds of the morning had the greatest supernatural force: people tried to use it and to load it with taboo in order to ensure its favorable quality. It seems that the evaluation of this time in various manifestations of folk culture clearly amalgamated the pagan cult of the first blush of day with the Christian cult of *Sol Invictus* (the tabooed time before daybreak and of daybreak). It expressed trust in the effective intervention of incantations (understood, however, in terms of prayer – see earlier comments) to gain the protection of supernatural forces.

These original and specific meanings of the marginal time before daybreak are also indicated by the liminal nature of disease:¹¹² the combination of mediating state with mediating time increased the efficacy of the magical act.

The multi-layered meanings of the formula “to get up in the morning,” discussed here, confirm its significance in the diurnal-nocturnal mini-cycle as a canonical collection of selected spheres of traditional symbolism,¹¹³ which indicated stable cultural patterns and rules securing the order of life. This constituted the emblematic and typological sense of the formula, which was fully conspicuous in repetition with the apparently reverse vector, in the mediating phase of nightfall with the fundamental model of recurrence inherent in it.

NOTES

¹ In the language of astronomy they are divided into the following kinds of daybreak and nightfall: civil ($h = -6^\circ$), nautical ($h = -12^\circ$) and astronomical ($h = \text{below } -18^\circ$); see e.g. A. Opolski: *Astronomiczne podstawy geografii*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964, p. 52-3.

² M. Singer: *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*, Chicago: 1972, p. 85 – distinguishes domestic and festal rites.

³ See Z. Biały: “Rytuały w procesie społecznej komunikacji,” in *Spoleczne funkcje folkloru*, Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1985, p. 7; W. Iwanow: “Rola semiotyki w cybernetycznym badaniu człowieka i społeczności,” in *Semiotyka kultury*, Introduction S. Żółkiewski, ed. E. Janus, M. R. Mayenowa, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, p. 88, 97-8; J. Frykman: “Ritual as Communication,” *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 1979, p. 54-67; N. A. Bringens: “The Communicative Aspect in Ethnology and Folklore,” *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 1979, p. 5-17.

⁴ This trend of research is favored by contemporary Russian folklorists: S. M. Tołstaja: “O siemantycznym jedinstwie obriada,” in *Folklor. Problemy sochranienija, izuczenija, propagandy*, Moskwa: 1988, part 1, p. 146; N. I. Tołstoj: “Fragmient sławianskiego jazyczestwa: archaiczkiej ritual-diałóg,” in *Sławianskij i bałkańskij folklor. Etnogienietičeskaja obščinnost' i tipologiczėske paralleli*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1984, p. 6; W. I. Charitonowa: “Żanrowaja differencyacyja zagoworno-zaklinatelnoj poezii,” *Filologiczėske Nauki*, 1988, no. 4, p. 7-12.

⁵ The case of charms and incantations is analogous, see S. I. Dmitriewa: “Słowo i obriad w miezienskich zagoworach,” in *Obriady i obriadowyj folklor*, Moskwa: 1982, p. 36, 49.

⁶ See W. I. Charitonowa: *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁷ See e.g. V. W. Turner: "Betwixt and Between. The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in V. W. Turner: *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 94 and others; J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii*, Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1989, p. 21 and others.

⁸ See A. Brzozowska-Krajka: "Anthropo-cosmic Dimension of Liminality in the Day-Night Cycle," in *Boundaries of Borders*, ed. T. Sławek, Cieszyn: ProArt, 1992, p. 29-38.

⁹ E.g. E. Leach: "The Symbolic Ordering of a Man-made World: Boundaries of Social Space and Time," in E. Leach: *Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols are Connected*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 35; E. Leach: "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse," in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. E. H. Lenneberg, Cambridge (Mass): 1964.

¹⁰ V. W. Turner: "Betwixt and Between....," p. 93-111.

¹¹ See L. Stomma: "Mit Alkmeny," *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 101.

¹² See M. Popko: *Magia i wróżbiarstwo u Hetytów*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982, p. 56. According to him, *katadesis* (binding) and *apolysis* (unbinding) were regarded as crucial notions in ancient magic.

¹³ G. van der Leeuw: "Primordial Time and Final Time," in *Man and Time. Papers from Eranos Yearbooks*, selected and trans. by D. Froebe-Kapteyn, ed. J. Campbell, vol. 3, ser. XXX, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957, p. 328.

¹⁴ See G. I. Malcew: *Tradycyjnyje formuły russkoj narodnoj nieobriadowej liriki*, Leningrad: Nauka, 1989, p. 80-1. In Polish *rano* means "early, in favorable time:" "Morning sowing and early marriage always bring prosperity" – O. Kolberg: *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 60. *Przysłowia*, ed. S. Świrko, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza – Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1967, p. 497.

¹⁵ For investigations of the emic-etic type see A. Dundes: "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales," in *Journal of American Folklore*, 1962, p. 95-105; K. Pike: *Language in Relation to a Unifical Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*, The Hague: 1967, p. 37; see also these notions as analyzed by W. Burszta: *Język a kultura w myśli etnologicznej*, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1986, p. 109-16.

¹⁶ C. Hernas: "Miejsce badań nad folklorem literackim," in *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. H. Markiewicz, J. Sławiński, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976, p. 475.

¹⁷ In this study the concept of formula is used in the meaning defined by G. I. Malcew: *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁸ See S. Niebrzegowska: "Gwiazdy w ludowym językowym obrazie świata," in *Językowy obraz świata*, ed. J. Bartmiński, Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1990, p. 152.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152-4; see also "Relacje o kosmosie. Teksty gwarowe z okolic Biłgoraja," ed. J. Bartmiński, *Etnolingwistyka*, 1981, vol. 2, p. 118, no. 40; M. Gładyszowa: *Wiedza ludowa o gwiazdach*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1960, p. 131, no. 194; W. Kupiszewski, Z. Węgiełek-Januszewska: *Słownictwo Warmii i Mazur. Astronomia ludowa, miary czasu i meteorologia*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1959, p. 23.

²⁰ Slavic peoples named the morning Venus either after the first blush of day (the time of its appearance), or directly after "zoria" meaning "light brightness," or after "utra" i.e. morning: see F. Sławski: *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego, 1954, no. 5, p. 569. In Slavonic mythology the Sun had two daughters: the morning Aurora and the evening Aurora. The morning Aurora was opening the gates of the heavenly palace when the sun was starting its daily journey in the sky, and the evening Aurora was closing them when the sun was returning home in the evening: see entry "Slavonic Mythology," in *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, trans. R. Aldington, D. Ames, ed. F. Guiraud, London: Batchworth, 1959, p. 296. Similarly to ancient Greek myths, where "in the final stage of night rosy Eos [...] arrives at Mount Olympus to foretell coming of her brother Helios. When he comes, she transforms into Hemera and accompanies him in his journey until, as Hespera, announces they have safely reached the western coast of Oceania" (*ibid.*, p. 144). In a Lithuanian folk song the morning and the evening stars act as the sun's servants: the morning star sends its matutinal light and the evening star makes its bed; in a Latvian folk song both these stars are mentioned together as god's sons: *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. M. Leach, J. Fried, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1972, p. 749.

²¹ S. Czernik, referring to pagan mysticism, evokes three virgin stars: of the morning, of the midday, and of the evening. He interprets the midday star symbolically as the greatest intensity of light, manifest especially on gloomy days or during winter: S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze. Wśród zamawiań i zaklęć*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1968, p. 59; see also S. Czernik: "Poezja zaklęć i uroków," in S. Czernik: *Stare złoto. O polskiej pieśni ludowej*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1962, p. 237-40. On the other hand, according to other Slavic myths, these three stars watched the dog chained to the Little Bear constellation.

²² *Ukraiński zamowlannja*, ed. M. O. Nowikowa. Kyiv: Wydawnictwo Chudożnoy Litieratury "Dnipro," 1993, p. 202, also p. 39, 40. In complex magic acts made by Eastern Slavs they have also various names: *Maria* (the

morning star), *Daria* or *Nastazja* (the evening star), *Makarida* (the midnight star): see Archives of Chair of Folkloristics MGU (Moscow University) – 75, 15-II, MGU-71, 20-2; L. N. Majkow: *Wielikoruskije zaklinanija*, Sankt-Petersburg: 1869, p. 513, no. 32 (236).

²³ See A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda i wieszczęje słowo*, Moskwa: "Sowietskaja Rossija," 1988, p. 100-1.

²⁴ See "Slavonic Mythology," p. 296.

²⁵ Amalgamation of pagan and Christian elements in the cult of the matutinal deity is also evidenced and preserved by the popular song *Kiedy ranne wstają zorze* composed by F. Karpiński in the spirit of a daily prayer, included in a collection of religious songs for common people (*Pieśni nabożne*, Wilno: 1792). It was regarded as a remarkable adaptation of folklore and was disseminated through numerous reprints in collections of religious songs – edited e.g. by priests M. Mioduszewski (1838-1953) and J. Siedlecki (1878-1987) – 39 editions.

²⁶ S. Czernik points to remnants of pre-Christian formulae of ritual communication as testifying to the cult of the morning star: S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze....*, p. 60-1; S. Czernik: "Magia trzech zórz," in S. Czernik: *Sny i widma*, ed. M. Czernik, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1971, p. 65-9. He evokes the oldest, medieval form of such incantation ("*Zarze, zarzyce, trzy siestrzyce...*") discovered by A. Brückner and reprinted in the collection *Średniowieczna poezja polska świecka*, ed. S. Vrtel-Wierczyński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952, p. 92; see also texts of magical verbal spells collected by Z. Wasilewski: *Jagodne (wieś w powiecie Łukowskim, gminie Dąbie)*. *Zarys etnograficzny*, Warszawa: E. Skiński, 1889, p. 228.

²⁷ In folklore of Eastern Slavs there are also variants of this image which strengthen its power by reconciling the pagan cult with Christianity: "*Zorze, zorzeczki // jest was na niebie // trzy siostry rodzone // czwarta chrzczona, // wydana na świat Maryja*" (There are three morning sisters-stars in the sky, and the fourth one is born and christened – the Virgin Mary) – W. P. Pietrow: "Zagowory," ed. A. N. Martynowa, in *Iz istorii russkoj sowietskoj folkloristiki*, Leningrad: 1981, p. 118.

²⁸ D. Forstner: *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. W. Zakrzewska and others, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990, p. 104.

²⁹ See e.g. "Godzinki do Najświętszej Marii Panny," in *Polskie śpiewy religijne społeczności katolickich. Studia i materiały*, vol. 1, ed. B. Bartkowski, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1990, p. 239.

³⁰ The image of Saint Mary as "curing" sins of humanity is a Christian variant of the primitive cult of the morning star – of her power to purify of demons of diseases through sacrifice contained in the complex magic act.

³¹ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 104.

³² See the iconic sign of the mythical duty of work: *ibid.*, p. 403.

³³ See J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 114. In Christian language spinning and weaving reflect "God's creative activity in his miraculous formation of nature" – see D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 403. Psalm 139 states: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb" (Ps 139, 13).

³⁴ See D. Wężowicz-Ziółkowska: *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII-XX wieku*, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1991, p. 161.

³⁵ See J. S. Wasilewski: "Symbolika ruchu obrotowego i rytualnej inwersji," *Etnografia Polska*, 1978, no. 1, p. 83.

³⁶ P. Gremal: *Słownik mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1987, p. 238, 276.

³⁷ See M. R. Pawłowa: "Ispolzowanie atributow tkaczskiego proizvodstwa w zagovorach," in *Etnolingwistika tieksta. Siemiotika małych form folkloru*, Moskwa: 1988, p. 32-4.

³⁸ See J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 226-33; also E. Leach: *Rethinking Anthropology*, London: University of London – The Athlone Press, 1961, p. 126.

³⁹ This ritualization of daily practices has been for centuries strengthened by the Church repertoire of morning and evening songs, see for example those compiled by A. Trzeciecki: *Modlitwa albo pieśni, gdy rano dziatki wstaną* (around 1558); *Pieśń ranna, gdy słońce wschodzi* (around 1559); *Pieśń, gdy słońce zachodzi* (around 1559); *Pieśń idąc spać* (around 1559); *Modlitwa, gdy dziatki spać idą* (after 1550). In the XVIth century and later they were profuse – reprinted in various psalmodies to fulfil people's spiritual needs: see S. Bąk, Z. M. Szweykowski: "Wstęp bibliograficzny," in A. Trzeciecki: *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 2 *Pisma polskie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1956, p. 14-52. Among them a cycle of religious morning and evening songs for children is remarkable: its indications of successive actions were later disseminated in poems creating a model of a good and mannerly boy. This is an interesting phenomenon from the borderland between folklore and popular writings.

⁴⁰ See G. I. Malcew: *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75. Malcew enumerates the genres of Russian folklore which apply this formula: the epic, the ritual text, the riddle.

⁴² These actions should not be understood in terms of contemporary personal hygiene but rather as gestures aiming merely at tidying oneself roughly.

⁴³ A. van Gennep: *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom, G. L. Caffee, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 20.

⁴⁴ M. Buchowski, W. Burszta: "Status języka w świadomości magicznej," *Etnografia Polska*, 1986, no. 1, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Given deficiency of analytic-synthetic perception, these acts were viewed without distinguishing their parts – see *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁶ On beliefs in evil charms as one of the most harmful kinds of superstition, their origins and various ways of exorcizing see H. Biegeleisen: *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego*, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1929, p. 232-54.

⁴⁷ See e.g. W. Kopaliński: *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990, p. 356-8. On inseminating function of dew see U. Majer-Baranowska: "Deszcz i jego zapładniająca funkcja," *Akcent*, 1986, no. 4, p. 30-6.

⁴⁸ On role of talisman, as well as on relationship between talismans and amulets see H. Biegeleisen: *op. cit.*, p. 354-5; J. Collin de Plancy: *Słownik wiedzy tajemnej*, trans. and ed. M. Karpowicz, Introduction P. Kuncewicz, Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza POLCZEK Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża, 1993, p. 181-2.

⁴⁹ T. M. Ciołek, J. Olędzki, A. Zadrożyńska: *Wyrzeczysko. O świętowaniu w Polsce*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1976, p. 56.

⁵⁰ See A. Brzozowska-Krajka: "Między magią a religią. O modlitewkach ludowych," in *Folklor – sacrum – religia*, ed. J. Bartmiński, M. Jasińska-Wojtkowska, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1995, p. 183-200.

⁵¹ J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 166.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵³ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁵⁴ See C. Lévi-Strauss: *Myśl nieoswojona*, trans. A. Zajęczkowski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969, p. 332.

⁵⁵ According to W. Pawluczuk (*Żywiol i forma*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978, p. 58), in folk ontology panpsychism linked man with the external world. Nature could be either friendly or hostile to man; its friendliness might be won by treating it according to established rules of behavior. They were particularly important in critical moments, e.g. at sunrise – when in the folk spiritual world a dramatic struggle between forces of night and day, of death and life took place, demanding man's total involvement.

⁵⁶ See J. E. Lips: "Magiczne moce," in J. E. Lips: *U źródeł cywilizacji*, trans. J. Brodzki, ed. J. Dynowski, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1957, p. 373.

⁵⁷ See *Nowa Służba Boża czyli Zbiór całoroczny nabożeństwa kościelnego i domowego z dodaniem historii cudownego obrazu Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej, rad do życia chrześcijańskiego oraz pieśni nabożnych*, ed. 5, Wilno: J. J. Jurkiewicz, K. Szalkiewicz [1926], p. 24.

⁵⁸ On gestural and oral formulism see M. Abramowicz: "Formuły a rola gestu w komunikacji ustnej według M. Jousse'a," *Literatura Ludowa*, 1979, nos. 1/3, p. 43-51.

⁵⁹ The rich cultural context of the sign of cross was delineated for example by D. Niewiadomski: "Semantyka znaków przyrodniczych

w XIX-wiecznych inicjalnych rytach orki i siewu,” *Annales UMCS*, 1987, sec. FF, vol. 5, p. 51-78.

⁶⁰ See A. Donini: *Zarys historii religii. Od kultów pierwotnych do początków chrześcijaństwa*, trans. B. Sieroszevska, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966, p. 63, 231-2; D. Niewiadomski: *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁶¹ Especially the conception of God of the people – of Christ personified as a beggar and a symbol of the oppressed: see E. Ciupak: *Katolicyzm ludowy w Polsce*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1973, p. 210-1; E. Ciupak: *Kultura religijna wsi*, Warszawa: Iskry, 1961.

⁶² *Droga krzyżowa. Dzieje nabożeństwa i antologia współczesnych tekstów*, ed. J. Kopeć, Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1985, p. 5.

⁶³ See O. Frejdenberg: “Wjazd do Jerozolimy na ośle (Ewangelie i mitologie),” trans. K. Rutkowski, *Literatura na świecie*, 1988, no. 3, p. 310.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁶⁵ *Droga krzyżowa....*, p. 79.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20-4.

⁶⁷ R. R. Marett: “From Spell to Prayer,” *Folk-Lore*, 1904, vol. 15, p. 134f; reprinted in R. R. Marett: *The Threshold of Religion*, London: Methuen, 1914.

⁶⁸ See H. Łowmiański: *Religia Słowian i jej upadek*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986, p. 335.

⁶⁹ See E. G. Kagarow: “Słowiesnyje elementy obriada,” published by A. N. Roznow, in *Iz istorii russkoj sowietskoj folkloristiki*, Leningrad: 1981, p. 67.

⁷⁰ Belief in special power inherent in incantations and prayers was reflected for example in the custom of soaking in water magical inscriptions on paper or another kind of material in water, and later drinking it – in order to absorb their supernatural power: see E. G. Kagarow: “Słowiesnyje elementy obriada...,” p. 69; C. Velten: *Sitten und Gebräuche der Suaheli. Nebsteinern Anhang über die Rechtsgewohnheiten der Suaheli*, Göttingen: 1903, p. 4f; F. Adrian-Werburg: *Prähistorisches und Ethnographisches*, Wien: 1915, p. 273.

⁷¹ See M. Buchowski: “Dwa modele funkcjonowania magii w społecznościach wiejskich,” in M. Buchowski: *Magia. Jej funkcje i struktura*, Poznań: Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza, 1986, p. 93 and others.

⁷² C. Hernas: “Wstęp,” in F. Kotula: *Znaki przeszłości. Odchodzące ślady zatrzymać w pamięci*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1976, p. 69.

⁷³ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 406.

⁷⁴ See S. Ciszewski: *Ognisko. Studium etnologiczne*. Kraków: 1903, p. 87-8.

⁷⁵ F. M. Müller: *Origine et développement de la religion*, quoted after

G. Bachelard: "Psychoanaliza ognia," in G. Bachelard: *Wyobrażenia poetycka. Wybór pism*, trans. H. Chudak, A. Tatarkiewicz, ed. H. Chudak, Introduction J. Błoński, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975, p. 42. All meanings of Latin word *ago, agere* – move forward, stir, be active, alive – point to movement, the main attribute of life; see the opposition movement/immobility corresponding to the dichotomy life/death.

⁷⁶ See *Mify narodow mira*, vol. 2, ed. S. A. Tokariw, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Encikłopedija, 1988, p. 239.

⁷⁷ See e.g. J. Parandowski: *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1990, p. 80-1.

⁷⁸ On the effect of naming, uttering a name see entry "Name" in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli, E. Hoffmann-Krayer, vol. 6, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987, p. 950-62.

⁷⁹ G. van der Leeuw: *Fenomenologia religii*, trans. J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1978, p. 245.

⁸⁰ See e.g. M. Popko: *op. cit.*, p. 32; L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 33 and others.

⁸¹ See B. Kupis, B. Wernichowska, J. Kamyczek: *Księga imion*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1975, p. 268.

⁸² L. Stomma: "Wierzenia o obcych," in L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej...*, p. 29-55.

⁸³ Apostrophe to fire-Zygmunt appears also in the magical formula of exorcizing a fire – expelling it outside inhabited and organized human space (Kot Znp 189): to wilderness, mountains, forests, to alien nobody's space, to the Other World from which it came. It is concluded with ritualistically repeated order: go away! go away! Mediating nature of this exorcism expressed a desire to return to the model set by the creation of the world, liberation of positive qualities of this ambivalent sign.

⁸⁴ See G. I. Malcew: *op. cit.*, p. 80; R. Panikkar: "Temps et histoire dans la tradition del'Inde," in *Les cultures et la temps*, Paris: 1975, p. 75-101.

⁸⁵ See S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze....*, p. 214. He evokes two scientific hypotheses and regards them as contradictory, though in fact they are complementary and derive from the ambivalent nature of the sign of fire which Czernik fails to notice. The first was put forward by W. Mannhard: he regarded the feast of fire (*Sobótka* – the summer solstice) as an attempt at casting a spell on it through magic rituals meant to provide it with sufficient amount of sunrays. To support this thesis he argued about the motif of the circle symbolizing the sun in festive time, making a fire by means of a circle, circling fields in supplicating processions, the motif of the circle in songs connected with Midsummer day; see also J. G. Frazer: *Złota gałąź*, trans. H. Krzeczowski, Introduction J. Lutyński, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1962, p. 487. The second hypothesis, propounded by

Finnish philosopher E. Westermarck, referred to fire celebrations: it interpreted fire as rather purifying and destroying than creative (see S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze...*, p. 214-15).

⁸⁶ See D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 75. On the complex symbolism of fire see e.g. M. Lurker: *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1989, p. 149-51; W. Kopaliński: *op. cit.*, p. 266-70; *Mify narodow mira*, vol. 2, entry "ogon"; J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant: *Dictionnaire des symboles, mythes, rêves, coutumes, gestes, formes, figures, couleurs, nombres*, vol. 2, Paris: Seghers et Jupiter, 1973, entry "feu."

⁸⁷ In symbolic language of traditional culture rubbish denotes riches and prosperity in farming and animal husbandry, see for example the widespread motifs of refuse and excrements turned into gold in tales about a sleeping army: T 826 sleeping Knights. The most popular version of this motif appears in Sabała's tale recorded by A. Stopka (*Sabała*, Kraków: L. Zwoliński i spółka, 1897, p. 111-16); see also its comic transformations, for example in tales based upon the motif of a mare and dollars and in T 1645B Treasure found in sleep, T 1529A Treasure sealed with excrements.

⁸⁸ See J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 233.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240-6.

⁹⁰ I. Kubiak, K. Kubiak: *Chleb w tradycji ludowej*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1982, p. 113.

⁹¹ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 455.

⁹² On earthly bread and the bread of Divine Kingdom see *ibid.*, p. 455-9.

⁹³ I. Kubiak, K. Kubiak: *op. cit.*, p. 116-19.

⁹⁴ See K. Dukova: "Mitologiczna opozycja prawy i lewy w bułgarskich dialektach," *Etnolingwistyka*, 1992, vol. 5, p. 45-58; see also R. Tomicki: "Religious Dualism in the Slavic Cosmogonic Myth," in *Poland at the Tenth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, ed. M. Frankowska, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1978, p. 59-67.

⁹⁵ See W. Wydra, W. R. Rzepka: *Chrestomatia staropolska. Teksty do r. 1543*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1984, p. 415.

⁹⁶ B. A. Uspieński: *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi*, trans. E. Janus and others, Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1985, p. 259-63.

⁹⁷ On the mediating nature of pregnancy see E. Nowina-Sroczyńska: "Przezroczyście ramiona ojca (fragmenty etnologiczne)," *Łódzkie Studia Etnograficzne*, 1991, vol. 30, p. 132 and others.

⁹⁸ A. K. Bajburin, A. L. Toporkow: *U istokow etikieta. Etnograficzeskije oczerki*, Leningrad: Nauka, 1990, p. 16.

⁹⁹ On the culture of "being" conditioning such situation, as distinguished from situations purposefully arranged see W. Pawluczuk: "Perspektywy kultury ludowej," *Regiony*, 1975, no. 2.

¹⁰⁰ See J. Ługowska, J. Kolbuszewski: "Generatywny wymiar sytuacji wykonawczej" (forthcoming).

¹⁰¹ In the process of communication cultural competence is called

competence of communication: see D. Hymes: "Socjolingwistyka i etnografia mówienia," in *Język i społeczeństwo*, trans. J. Arnold and others, ed. and Introduction M. Głowiński, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1980, p. 41-82; also A. Piotrowski: "Koncepcja procesu komunikowania w socjologii," *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 1979, vol. 31/1, p. 151.

¹⁰² See W. W. Pleszakowa: "Błagopozęłanija kak folklorno-rieczewoj żanr," in *Etnolingwistika tieksta....*, p. 94-5.

¹⁰³ See S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze....*, p. 197; A. Brückner: *Mitologia słowiańska i polska*, ed. and Introduction S. Urbańczyk, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985, p. 124-5.

¹⁰⁴ A. K. Bajburin, A. L. Toporkow: *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ See formulas of charming good time for man and his household as amulets for a journey, preserved in the beliefs of Eastern Slavs until nowadays – *Uczebnyje zadanija po kursu "Ustnoje narodnoje poetičeskoje tworczestwo."* *Tradicyonnaja kriestianskaja magija*, ed. S. B. Adoniewa, O. W. Owczynnikowa, Sankt-Petersburg: Sankt-Pietierburgskij Gosudarstwiennyj Uniwersitet, 1992, p. 9, nos. 23, 24, 26; p. 25, no. 112.

¹⁰⁷ W. Burszta: *Języka a kultura w myśli etnologicznej....*, p. 72 and others.

¹⁰⁸ See E. P. Bławatskaja: *Tajnaja doktrina. Izwleczenije iz otdiela "Ewolucija simwolizma,"* vol. 1, ed. A. Kamienskaja, E. P. Bławatskaja, Pietrograd: 1915, p. 6-7.

¹⁰⁹ H. Biegeleisen (*Lecznictwo ludu polskiego....*, p. 17) pointed to ritualistic roots of folk therapeutics and prophylaxis: see for example remedy for snake bite. Ritualization of this complex magic act is indicated by the alimentary taboo concerning a wizard (the charm is effective before breakfast), by his gestures (crossing himself, kneeling) and words (formulae of incantation), as well as by triple repetition of the magic act (in the morning – in the evening – in the morning).

¹¹⁰ A. Paluch: "*Zerwij ziele z dziewięciu miedz....*" *Ziolołecznictwo ludowe w Polsce w XIX i początku XX wieku*, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1989, p. 23.

¹¹¹ Already Pliny in *Historia naturalis* gave numerous examples of digging and collecting medicinal herbs before sunrise: see H. Biegeleisen: *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego....*, p. 27.

¹¹² See L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej....*, p. 155 and others.

¹¹³ G. I. Malcew: *op. cit.*, p. 86-7.

CHAPTER V

APPARENTLY REVERSED SYMMETRY – THE MEDIATING STRUCTURE OF NIGHTFALL

The twilight is approaching,
The night is approaching,
Let us ask God for help
And for protection
From evil spirits,
Who in darkness practise
Their cunning most.
(text: A.T. [A. Trzeciecki] after 1550,
music: Waław from Szamotuły)

In folk imagination the time of twilight, like the time of dawn, was charged with a set of axionormative meanings, referring to the intricate complex of traditional associations constituting the foundations of folk ontology. These ideas, inherent in both verbal and non-verbal texts of folklore, disclose, in conjunction with the related systems of beliefs, peculiar significance of the threshold of nightfall in the diurnal-nocturnal cycle; they are integrated with the supreme concept of the cult of life in the phase of its symbolic decline. Falling darkness denotes the gradual dying of light, the withering of time until its standstill (the phase of Night), along with the implications of this process. Cosmic patterns make the conclusion of human diurnal activity parallel to the sun's:

The sun is set, darkness is coming
Work is finished
Energetic ploughman
Comes back home.

(Kolb 13, 61, 105)

The return home before the night is imperative (Kolb 18, 108) to enable preparations for sleep – symbolic death. Twilight constitutes not apocalypse but the extinguishing of vital forces: a human being is absorbed, assimilated by darkness, disappears in the evening gloom. Understanding evening time as final time opens an eschatological perspective as well. The mediating phase of twilight is the final stage of human conscious activity: its design must take into account a double passage – to nocturnal non-being and again to diurnal being. It follows the conception of final time not as the end of existence, but as a re-creation of the original time, the actualization of potentialities which are both immanent in the absolute beginning and transcend it.¹ All signs of this borderline situation are meant to anticipate the beginning: in folk understanding of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, the evening is viewed as the beginning of the next day (see the eve in the festive cycle as a relic of this belief). For example, in the region of Chełm (eastern Poland) it is considered inappropriate to work on the eve of a feast, as this time is regarded to be already festal (Kolb 33, 26). Ritualization of this time – most intense in the climax directly preceding total separation – enabled the great transition (Night) and the subsequent aggregation (dawn) and re-actualization of time. Hence the structural analogy of the morning and evening times of passage with the apparently reversed vector (the principle of reversed symmetry) – both leading to the same conclusion expressed by the following evening prayer:

Jesus Christ, make happy my sleep,
And merry getting up the next morning.

(Kot Znp 256)

The perspective of the final time determined the scenario of the mediating phase of nightfall terminating man's diurnal activity. The morning etiquette of greeting had its counterpart in the evening etiquette of farewell, comprising the intention of magic closing, protection against the time of darkness negatively evaluated. Traditional norms of etiquette determined man's behavior both in relation to other members of his community

and to the personified world of nature, ensured stable participation in it. Hence the mythological addressees (essential for human existence) of such actions: “to my field I make a farewell address in the evening and a welcome address in the morning, as it is our good and holy mother” (Kolb 6, 344, 592), sanctified with human toil (Kolb 21, 149). The constant application of rules of etiquette was believed to secure the continuity of the process, annual re-creation of life in nature, with all its traditional connotations – dominated by the fertility as a dynamic sign of life. Evening separation from a village community, like morning aggregation to it, assumed the form of ritual dialogue shaped by the degree of competence for communication of its participants: the meaning of such dialogue emerged in the perspective of *temps de passage*, implying regeneration of life. A variant of this dialogue ran: “‘Good evening, sleep white.’ ‘And you sleep red.’” (MAAE 4, 106). In the context of folk anthropology of colors the illocutionary force of these formulas of ritual communication was directed towards enchanting life. In fact, the two colors mentioned here are not contradictory, as they refer to sanctity, to “golden symbolism,” symbols of life, and may function as synonyms interrelated through mythological images.² Likewise, other, seemingly facetious farewell formulas evoke the symbolism of movement, rebirth of life: “Good night, call fleas for help, and carabids for play” (MAAE 4, 106; see also *Wisła* 17, 35). The remarkable vitality of fleas is articulated by riddles and “wise questions,” e.g.: “What creature can survive the strongest frost? A flea, which even then jumps in a shirt” (Folf Pzl 43, 68; see also 224, 960). In folk meteorology, particularly great activity of fleas in the evening predicts rain (ZWAK 5, 153), and, again, situates them in the realm of the symbolism of fertility, of life. In the communication between man-man and man-cosmos, farewell formulae were components of the evening ritual, assumed a conspicuously imperative form and were an indispensable element enabling passage to a new state (see ritual parting in the funeral ceremony). According to folk ethos, the violation of orders always entailed severe sanctions and destroyed life-giving harmony and prosperity; it

undermined the principle of reciprocity and mystical solidarity lying at the foundations of man's relationship with nature.

In the evening *temps de passage* the essence of this relationship is most clearly demonstrated by the etiquette of bidding farewell to the fire of the hearth, equivalent to sunrays. In Polish folklore it has assumed a Christianized form. The process of the Christianization of cultic phenomena resulted for example in putting fire in the charge of St. Laurence (10 August), the patron saint of fire – every evening, before going to sleep, a housewife should cross the fire saying the following prayer: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen; most blessed Saint Laurence, I give this praised, worthy fire to you, under Your holy protection” (Kolb 9, 144), or she should generally entrust it to the care of Jesus and All Saints (Mosz KIS 2, 2, 205). The glow, preserved in embers from day to day, was the source of new fire, new life, family happiness, wealth. Therefore, like a living creature, it deserved magical protection:

When fire burns itself out for the night, you should carefully cover it with ashes and say:

holy angel
sit on this stool
by this fire.

(*Wisła* 17, 141; *ZWAK* 16, 253; *Bieg Wes* 405)

The angels' protection, accorded to people by *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament* (Tb 3, 17; Ps 91, 11; Matt 18, 10; Acts 12, 15), was clearly broadened in these evening farewell formulas to include fire – the element of crucial importance for human existence. This confirmed a peculiar symbiosis of life of man and in the universe, too. In the realm of the polysemy of this sign, parting with it denoted in fact exorcizing, enchanting it, anticipation of life. Formulae of such incantations were opened with gestures signifying unity with the divine through their content symbolizing victory of Life over Death (the mediating nature of Christ on the tree of the Cross: the name of Jesus denoting victorious life, the power which governs not only death but also return to life³). Exorcizing was also meant to arouse

exclusively beneficial properties of a charmed object, which was also expressed by morphological variants of this lexeme taking most often a diminutive form: *ogień, ogieniaszek* (little fire). This nature of formulaic denotations of the evening fire of the hearth was preserved mostly in the folklore of other Slavic peoples and of their neighbors, which were Christianized merely superficially. For example Latvians, before going to sleep, charmed the fireside in the following way: "Sleep my fire, like a mouse in a nest. Do not put on your shoes, do not raise your wings: God the Father, etc." (Cisz O 82). The category of peace, immobility, peculiar to time brought to a standstill, was inherent in the magical formula indicating the behavior of this element. In White Russia and Little Russia a spell-request addressed to a dying-out fire – "Holy, wealthy, go to sleep, You are twelve brothers, defend us" (Mosz KIS 2, 2, 509) – portrays it as a rich divine distributor of happiness. This was the meaning of the archaic words *bog', bogat'*, denoting wealth,⁴ reflected for example in a private prayer from the region of Żywiec (in southern Poland) directed to a newly-made fire: dear fire, divine treasure, protect us always against poverty (Mosz KIS 2, 2, 509). A formula known in Prusy (in north-eastern Poland), used by housewives tending the evening fire of the hearth comprises a directly-expressed warning of "God's anger:" "The Virgin, my fire, I am covering you nicely for the night, not to make you angry with me" (Cisz O 81). This admonition arises from fear that neglecting the obligation to look after the fire and to greet it in the evening and in the morning might offend it and induce it to take revenge upon people by burning their household. Tales about its wrath were as popular in folk oral tradition as exempla consolidating ideas and norms of the Church. Their peculiar stylistics of admonitory dialogue resulted from their precautionary function:

On a meeting of two fires one asks the other: how does your housewife leave you in the evening? She sweeps me around nicely and makes the sign of the cross over me in the name of the Father and of the Son –

Holy fire in ash

The Virgin Mary in church.

And how does your housewife leave you – the other asks – She neither sweeps me around nor makes the sign of the cross over me. I will burn her household. Right – encourages the other. And so it happened.

(tale from the area of Częstochowa in central Poland – Pawł Zeb 101)

The message of the following tale from the region of Łuków and Lublin (in eastern Poland) is similar:

A woman borrowed some fire. On the kitchen range the borrowed fire started to talk with the domestic one. The first said: “my housewife washes my eyes and makes the sign of the cross over me every morning and every evening.” And the other said: “And my housewife splashes me with dish water. How should I treat her?” “Trifle with her.” “And her cottage was burnt” – the tale concludes.
(Cisz O 22)

According to the story-teller, this punishment-warning for violating the etiquette was fully justified. The cultic attitude (i.e. of obeying such rules) vis-à-vis this ambivalent element guaranteed the liberation of its exclusively beneficial properties. This was reflected in appropriate verbal text – for example in the following tale from Gołębiowska Wola (the region of Sieradz in central Poland):

A fire which was never bid farewell went to God to lament and complain of never being swept around and put out with water. And another fire was merrily reporting to God of being always appropriately bid farewell and tended by his housewife, who deserved thus God’s blessing.

(Bieg Uk 500)

Fire appliances, too, like household fire itself, were attributed the role of magic safeguard on the principle of sympathetic, contagious magic. In his ethnological study of fire S. Ciszewski maintains that the chimney and fireplace were like the altar in church (Cisz O 163) and that kissing a stove was customary for a guest entering the house (Cisz O 12). Making the sign of the cross over the kitchen range was a part of the evening ritual. The technique of this gesture clearly followed imitative magic,

subordinated to the projection of the time of beginning. This is exemplified by the following description of evening routine recorded in Przebierzany near Kraków (southern Poland):

Having prepared the supper a housewife takes pots away from the kitchen range, cleans it and makes with circular gestures the sign of the cross over it.

(*MAAE* 4, 104)

The emphasis upon such action turns this exorcism into a magical creation of the sacred space, free from all impure forces, and strengthens the apotropaic power of words bringing reality into existence.

The extinguished fire of the hearth – a metonymic sign of dying – ceased to perform its protective function. Thus the border between life and death required additional magic safeguards, amulets-spells. In traditional culture they appeared in definite situations – in reference to objects liable to a change of type of activity and (in broader terms) of their ontological status. Under such circumstances, norms of etiquette, which satisfactorily regulate normal coexistence of an object with other objects, had to be strengthened by extraordinary factors – amulets. Belief in their magic properties originated in the substantial understanding of words – words-things comprising *orenda* – an impersonal, magic, mystical force, a hypothetical potentiality.⁵ Its liberation in a speech act aimed at subordinating the supernatural power to a speakers's will, at shaping the surrounding reality. In the evening *temps de passage* this meant the creation of a safe space – material, domestic and esoteric, spiritual – free from internal and external menace. Such texts of magic protected a household – i.e. focussed on mundane affairs, peasant utilitarianism – and reflected the traditional isomorphism of the hearth and man (the house as a replica of the human body and a symbol of *imago mundi*⁶). They have been preserved until nowadays in Eastern Slavic folklore (mostly in the area of Polesie – formerly in eastern Poland, at present in the borderland between Ukraine and Byelorussia), more resistant to processes of Christianization than Western Slavic peoples:

Sleep, king-fire
 Sleep – blessed house.
 Around our house
 There is an iron enclosure
 An iron fence.
 Enemies, thieves, robbers
 Do not approach
 Angels are in the windows,
 Angels are in the doors,
 Angels are with us,
 To fall asleep quickly,
 To sleep well
 To get up briskly.

(AUP 112 SLK)

The magic closing, “iron fence” (a motif typical of Slavic complex magic acts) was intended to effectively isolate the house from external forces hostile to man. It also denoted the consecration of the enclosed space, the transformation of the sphere of the profane into a sacred place, with special care given to the protection of borders separating these two realms – i.e. mediating points (windows, doors) requiring additional safeguards.⁷ These sensitive borders become prominent in the following Eastern Slavic amulet “for the night” which emphasizes the apotropaic function of the cross as a universal means of protection against evil powers (see the proverb: “The Devil is afraid of the cross,” – Nkp 1, 427, 40):

I go to sleep
 I put the cross
 From the earth to the sky
 On the windows, on the doors
 On the chimney.

(*Obieriegi* 23, 103)

The cross, a magic safeguard against demons, was also meant to constitute a real, physical shelter, according to the belief that “A devil avoids entering a house through a window, as its frame is cross-wise” (Piet KdPRz 202).

This anti-demonic role of the cross is also emphasized in East Carpathian (*Hucul*) mythology: “people make the cross on their

gates and doors to prevent the Devil from entering their household” (Mit huc 25). Christian tradition combined this practice with the mysterious feast of Epiphany and the equally mysterious signs of Three Wise Men made on doors and beams. The space inside a house was also exposed to danger. According to D. Benedyktowicz and Z. Benedyktowicz, viewing this interior as demonic space was a recurrent motif in folk tradition.⁸ This necessitated all possible precautions against the liberation of demonic forces dormant in the domestic space, as well as complete separation from external evil forces. Opening it to the world, inviting all powers and creatures, even those most dangerous for man, could take place only in festive time – during the holy evening of Christmas Eve.⁹

Private bed-time devotions, too, were intended to create such a safe space, interior and exterior; they referred to the formula “I go to sleep,” principal for the liminal phase of night, pointing to individual ritualistic performance (see the first person singular pronoun), enchanting this person’s fate. Thus, such prayers functioned as a direct, concrete defence of man against dangers in the stopped time, the time of *stasis*, of the passive unconscious. They constituted a kind of “iron letter,” *glejt* (from the German *geleiten* = to lead), enabling the safe achievement of the desired morning renewal of life. Multiple variations of non-canonical evening prayers with the initial phrase “I go to sleep, I lack bed-clothes,” peculiar to both Western and Eastern Slavs,¹⁰ constituted the kernel of prayers-charms added to canonical evening orisons. All Christian prayers preceding complex magic acts intensified their power, according to the general principle inherent in the structure of such prayers: “I go to sleep with God, // I get up with God, // I give my soul to God” (Kot Znp 363). Thus, man’s last thoughts, words and actions, like first ones, should be offered to God; hence an evening prayer followed by eating was regarded as not valid. Archaic, pre-Christian explication of this idea applies metaphorical representations of language as key and mouth as lock in the act of magic closing in the evening liminality, preserved in charms of Eastern Slavic peoples.¹¹ Thus, the creative power of word, like the divine *fiat*,

was meant to comprise the essence of evening prayers. "To fall asleep with God's name pronounced" was a basic principle of Christian ethos.¹² In non-canonical prayers it was combined with indications of the appropriate time of their utterance: "in the morning before breakfast and in the evening after supper" (Kot Znp 116, 437), "on getting up and going to sleep" (Kot Znp 93, 294, 311, 344), "twice a day" (Kot Znp 63, 71), etc. – if said at these moments, the gates of Heaven would open and the gates of Hell would close. To the folk mind, "One who remembers God, will not be forsaken by Him,"¹³ and "The Devil enters one who forgets about God, does not go to church, neglects prayers and confession" (Kolb 48, 272). The following reflection, too, should accompany bed-time orisons:

It is equally important to start and to conclude a new day well; new grace bestowed by God, His protection against nocturnal dangers should be the subject of our supplications.¹⁴

Devotional sacralization of the time of end assumed the form of concrete, almost tangible shelter – in accordance with the Christian notion of prayer as "an unbroken shield, protecting from evil and all shots by our souls' enemies."¹⁵ In Wielkopolska (Great Poland) it was believed that "witches were mostly after unchristened babies or after those who, although christened, were neither crossed over nor safeguarded by devotions" (Kolb 15, 93). Such protection was indispensable especially in this last moment of one's life (see chapter II: real death at night):

To quote a bed-time devotion: I go to sleep as if to die. If I were not to get up any more, never to wake up to faith, I desire to remain sincerely loving you my God and other people, and I entrust my Soul to you.¹⁶

Battle metaphors of orisons originated in *The Old Testament* representation of God as an eastern ruler and angels – as the divine army executing His orders to rule the world (1 Kings 22, 19; Is 6, 1; Ps 103, 20; 148, 2; Neh 9, 6). In Abraham's vision in Gen 15, 1 God says: "Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield." This

declaration was generalized for example in the supplication song *Pod Twą obronę* (Under your protection), which reveals the true motivation of the orisons:

We pray today to Your glory,
Since You are our shield, Our Heavenly Father.

(Siedl Śpk 538, 484)

The image of God-shield derived from the idea of solarized deity (see Latin *clipeus* – an oval shield, but also the solar one).¹⁷ St. Paul, too, defined faith as a shield “putting out all hot arrows from hell, kept in front of the whole body – like a wall, a rampart.”¹⁸ Hence Psalm 91 (on God’s protection) comes as an integral part of the canonical collection of evening prayers which functions as a magical introduction to their non-canonical section. Its free translation, made by J. Kochanowski (1579), is known as the popular religious song *Kto się w opiekę* (*Pieśń o Opatrzności Boskiej*) (Under the care of your Providence). God’s presence in the crucial phase of bed-time *temps de passage* guaranteed safety. These recurrent motifs of the Gospel and the Cross (i.e. of the sacrifice of the Cross and the Passion) function as a shield, a rampart – transformation of the magical formula of cosmic closing. According to W. Pietrow, it is typical of household incantations;¹⁹ it also appears in wedding songs in Little Russia.²⁰ In Polish folklore its form is already Christianized, for example:

I go to sleep,
I lack bed-clothes:
I will turn holy scripture into my bedding,
I will cover myself with the cross,
And I am not afraid of you, evil spirit...

(*Wisła* 3, 596; see also *Kot Znp* 270)

These formulae of elementary structures of Christianity acquired apotropaic function in the realm of magic – especially *The Holy Bible*, personifying Christ Himself, its speaker.²¹ The archaic Latinized Greek name for the Gospel – *euaggelion* – denoted literally “favorable, good word,” i.e. the Good News

T. Seweryn's commentary directly indicates the magic function of this iconic sign:

In the upper middle part there is Zechariah's cross with two cross-pieces – surrounded by a stole with an inscription which also frequently appears in analogous amulets: *Ecce crucem Domini – fugite partes adversae* (I defy you with the Lord's cross † † enemies flee). At the bottom there is St. Benedict's medal: the Greek cross with letters C S S M L placed vertically, which read *crux sacra sit mihi lux*; and letters N D S M D placed horizontally – *non draco sit mihi dux* (let the Holy Cross be my light, and not satan – my guide). The letters on the rim read from the top: I H S – the abbreviation of Jesus's name, V R S – *vade retro satanas* (go away satan), N S M V – *numquam suade mihi vana*, S M Q L I V B – *sunt mala, quae libas, ipse vena bibas* (never advise me vanity, what you taste is evil, drink this poison yourself). This is completed with the letters C S P B – *crux sancti patris Benedicti* in the background. Such talismans were widespread in the XVIIIth century. Some of them were put into cradles.

(*Lud* 37, 295)

Other crosses functioning as talismans were carried as protection from dangers and evil forces, still others were fixed on doors to ward off pestilence (*Lud* 37, 295) – as exemplified by the following wood engraving, entitled *Contra pestem* (the magic for pestilence – see p. 128).

The apotropaic nature of the sign of cross was also emphasized by the Fathers of the Church (especially St. Cyril of Jerusalem). *The Holy Bible*, too, interpreted it as effective defence against satans: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col 2, 14-15).

The motifs of the Cross and the Holy Scripture, objectified and deprived of their transcendence, were reduced in bed-time devotions to the level of symbols pointing to basic Christian concepts²⁴ – but living symbols, with sacral force inherent in it. This way of constructing magic protection was in conformity with the spirit of religious faith in Providence:



Under Your omnipotent care, I should not be afraid of any ill fortune. The eye of your Providence is watchful when my eyes are closed. Your omnipotent arm, power and love guard and rescue me when threatened by danger and death.²⁵

St. Luke appeals: "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent" (Luke 24, 29); a soul loving prayer is frightful to devils.²⁶ The presence of sacramental objects and sacraments transformed one's dangerous isolation from the social group, beginning at twilight, into inclusion in a religious community, protecting from all evil. "Enemy-Satan, leave me // I am not Yours but God's" (Majk Wz 518) was the concluding phrase of an Eastern Slavic bed-time prayer-incantation definitely placing one beyond the reach of the Devil's power. The same function was performed by Christ's seal:

I go to sleep
I pray for protection
of the Holy Spirit
Christ's seal is upon me.

(AUP 151 CzRD)

It is necessary in every situation of menace – this is a direct reference to the sign of cross as a seal, which according to Revelation (Rev 7, 3) is inseparable from every servant of God.²⁷ Religious identity had broader significance, too. Peasant religion, unlike that of other social classes or strata, was always communal: it created bonds, familiarity, safety (an alien, for example a German, a Jew, etc., was viewed as representing a different faith). Signs of such community denoted complete safety (*MAAE* 4, 110).

The declaration of religious solidarity, as the principal anti-demonic protection, becomes very clear especially in the light of a Christian's first initiation:

I go to sleep, but I lack bed-clothes; I will turn holy scripture into my bedding, and will cover myself with the cross. And you satan do not stand over me – I am not afraid of you as I was christened and named by Jesus himself and the Virgin and am beyond the reach of the Devil's power.

(*ZWAK* 2, 241; also *MAAE* 4, 110)

The evocation of the beginning of one's Christian life also emphasizes the role of the cross as the biblical seal of belonging to God and destiny to be saved, and of the fact that "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom 6, 3).

According to S. G. F. Brandon:

In the Christian rite of baptism, the neophyte was accordingly ritually assimilated to Christ in his death by immersion in water – indeed the primitive custom of baptismal nudity and descent into the water signified death and the going down into the grave, which Christ had once experienced. Emergence from the "waters of death," the re-clothing, and the reception of a new name and mystic food in the early baptismal ritual, in turn re-presented the resurrection of Christ,

so that the neophyte might also participate in this new risen life. In other words, it was believed that the ritual of baptism perpetuated the virtue or efficacy of a past event, namely, the resurrection of Christ, so that the baptised person should also be raised to a new and glorious life.²⁸

Assimilation to Christ in his Death and Resurrection, through the ritual of baptism evoked in non-canonical prayers, becomes also a potential *rite de passage* into the new, eternal form of existence, beyond the destructiveness of temporality (if falling asleep as “small agony”²⁹ and sleep as symbolic death turn to be eternal sleep). In view of this, solitude, so unfavorable for one who passes to “the other side,” is only seeming:

We go to sleep alone – not alone,
Twelve angels are with us.
Two at the head, two at the legs,
Two by the left side,
Two by the right side,
Two guard the soul,
Two lead it to heaven. Amen.

(*MAAE* 4, 140)

The motif of protection (fundamental to private bed-time devotions) acquired here an irrational aspect introduced by the “heavenly army” of angels, headed by Michael – allies of Providence,³⁰ Christ’s servants – effectively defending against satan, with whom they were destined to be permanently at war (Rev 12, 7-9). The cumulation of twelve angels (this number symbolized happiness and spatio-temporal fulfilment³¹) is here a combination of Guardian Angel – man’s divine protector (who replaced *rodzanice* – pagan demons of fate³²) – and twelve apostles, pillars of Christianity (Matt 10).³³ This association has its logical basis, too: Jesus “ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils” (Mark 3, 14-15). They are God’s emissaries, as expressed by their Latin name *apostello* meaning “to send,” from which the noun “apostle” was derived. The meaning of “twelve” as a perfect

number, symbolizing complete totality, is of particular importance for the evening *temps de passage*. Its protective, magic power gets enhanced by the combination with multiplied evenness. In non-canonical prayers the motif of twelve angels is sometimes linked with the figure of seven crosses:

I go to sleep, but I lack bed-clothes,
I will turn holy scripture into my bedding,
I will cover myself with the cross
I am not afraid of you satan.
All evil forces retreat
From the four corners, and the fifth doors!
Because the Virgin will be sleeping here
With seven crosses
And with twelve angels...

(Kot Znp 454)

This petrified structure becomes more meaningful in the context of relevant ethnographic-folkloric facts: for example in view of a story from around 1826 recorded in Wielkopolska (Great Poland) about a priest who was exorcizing a devil from his cow by making seven signs of the cross over her (Kolb 15, 85), or the following prayer-amulet preserved among Eastern Slavs:

I put the first cross from the Holy Spirit: the second – from Our Father; the third – from Jesus Christ, His Son; the fourth – from Our Lady; the fifth – from the holy angel, God's servant; the sixth – from west to east; the seventh – from earth to heaven.

(*Obieriegi* 29, 128)

The biblical symbolism of the number seven connotes the notion of fullness, ordered totality – fundamental both to the evening *temps de passage* and to man's earthly life (physical and spiritual). In folk prayers three is the number of the soul (see the Trinity), and four – the number of the body³⁴ referring both to the motif of mystical protection (the Virgin Mary, Guardian Angel) and to cosmic closing "from west to east," "from earth to heaven." This horizontal-vertical crossing of space enriched folk prayers with the eighth cross: the mystery of the eighth day

(being at the same time the first day) constituted culmination of their irrational power.³⁵ This special day reminded one of the beginning of creation (i. e. pointed to the rebirth of man) and was simultaneously a symbol of Christ's Resurrection and hope for the resurrection of humanity.³⁶ The following evening prayer from the region of Żytomierz (Ukraine) directly evokes the sign of the cross eight times, with its surface anti-demonic meaning:

In the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit – Amen (3 ×)
 The cross at the legs
 The Virgin at the head.
 I make my bed with the cross
 I cover myself with the cross.
 I go to sleep
 I am not afraid of anybody.
 The cross at my left side,
 The cross in my heart
 The cross from evening to midnight
 From midnight to daybreak
 From daybreak for ages.
 I make my bed with the cross
 I cover myself with the cross
 I go to sleep
 I am not afraid of anybody.
 God, send me
 Peaceful night.

(Arch Charit)

In non-canonical bed-time devotions the permanent evocation of the time of beginning combines with the dominance of the magic of closing (Alkmena –) expressing the mediating nature of the time of nightfall. This idea is most conspicuous in incantations preserved in XIXth and XXth century Polish collections of folklore, particularly from areas inhabited by Eastern Slavs, where they are used until nowadays (especially in Polesie – formerly in eastern Poland, at present in the borderland between Byelorussia and Ukraine). They most often comprise an extra-textual indicator of the situation: “before sleep,” “for sleep,” “to defend you against terror of anything and anybody.”³⁷ They primarily emphasize the magical protection of both body and soul:

I go to sleep in peace.
God Himself at the head,
And Saint Mary at the legs
Angels on both sides.
And Saint Mary
Guards my soul
From evening to midnight,
From midnight to dinner,
From dinner to eternity.

(PA-83, Zolot)

Eschatological fear is overcome through magic closing from four principal parts of the human body, corresponding on the cosmic plane to four extreme points of the horizon. Such closing conditions complete unity, safety, re-ordering according to the time of beginning, as, since prehistoric times, number four symbolized permanence, universality and totality.³⁸ This closing is analogous to Church recommendations (appended to evening canonical prayers) of the appropriate final gestures of human life:

Before sleep make four crosses with the thumb of your right hand on your forehead, saying † Jesus † of Nazareth † the King † of the Jews, save me from an evil and sudden death.³⁹

This imperative is incorporated in St. Hippolytus of Rome's explanation of the great power of the cross against satan:

Always try to shield your body with the cross, as it is the sign of the Passion given against satan. This gesture must be made in good faith. This spiritual virtue from one's heart is like public ablution. On seeing it, your enemy trembles and – if you do not yield but strengthen your commitment to God – the enemy flees.⁴⁰

Private bed-time devotions constituted combinations and transformations of former pagan ideas with Christian patterns of thinking, praying and singing. The XVIIIth century song *Na Dobrą Noc Pana Jezusowi* (To Jesus Christ for good night) stands out among them.⁴¹ The formation of these structures was influenced by psalms, too, especially Psalm 91 *O Bożej opiece* (on

the Lord's protection). Among Eastern Slavs it also functioned as a separate text – an introductory prayer to a complex magic act.⁴² Non-canonical folk orisons assimilated not only charismatic mediating figures from the Christian pantheon (the Virgin, St. Anna, angels) and prayers to them, but also apocryphal pieces referring to the Passion and Our Lady's and angels' assistance in protecting sinners against God's wrath. In particular, the structure of these private bed-time devotions absorbed, on the principle of amplification, initial phrases, apostrophic requests, or parts of prayers to the Guardian Angel and Saints – with various degrees of transformation of their style and content.⁴³ The motif of metaphysical guard was also an element of magic closing in the evening time of passage, implying the idea of anthropological dualism (see chapter II):

Guardian Angel
Be always on my side.
In the morning, in the evening, by day, at night,
Be always ready to help!
Defend me from death!
Let me see St. Anna,
Our Lady's mother,
St. Anna,
Guard my soul and my body
Until my eternal life!

(Kot Znp 454-5)

The occurrence of apocryphal pieces about *Sen Najświętszej Panny Marii* (the Virgin's sleep) in the structure of evening prayers should be also explained by a desire for magic protection arising from belief in the miraculous revelation of hope of the Resurrection. According to J. S. Bystron, the oldest version of this text dates back to 1546: it comprises the motif of sleep with hope of resurrection (central for the evening transition):⁴⁴

St. Mary fell asleep on Calvary.
Her beloved Son approached her!
I have seen you only once on Calvary:
Your legs pierced:
Your hands pierced:

Your holiest blood bled.
I was looking upon it,
And felt dead myself.
One who will be saying this prayer
By days and at night
Will be happy.
Myself, angels and apostles will fetch his soul after death.
(Kot Znp 454; see also 439-40, 476, 478, 480-1)

This mythical parable incorporated in bed-time devotions had the form of a holy magic letter from heaven (*Himmelsbrief*), written by God himself. It disclosed the instrumental understanding of principles of Christian faith and functioned as a real amulet – according to a verbal formula of the following kind: “One who says a text of such *Himmelsbrief* every day and carries it permanently, will be protected from all sins, will not die without Communion, and finally will be awaited in the Heavenly Kingdom” (*Wisła* 11, 329). Belief in the magic impact of such texts determined their inclusion into the structure of evening private prayers, despite their disapproval by the official Church, persecuting them as superstitions.⁴⁵

Canonical and non-canonical prayer formulae functioned in terms of charming an individual's fate and the times of both beginning and end (the idea of new beginning inherent in the time of end, evaluated positively this ambivalent, liminal situation). This association was verbalized also in the offering which concluded canonical orisons and also functioned as a magical introduction to their non-canonical parts. The reverse situation took place in the complex magic act of witch-doctoring, whose formulae were followed by offering and other common prayers.⁴⁶ Patterns of these folk offerings, appropriate for liminal phases of ordinary and festive diurnal-nocturnal cycles, were preserved in the following ethnographic document from the area of Wieliczka (in southern Poland):

I dedicate my prayer to you, Jesus: to your glory and worship. My beloved Jesus! Thank you for the past happy day and for protecting me from sudden death and eternal damnation.

*

I dedicate this bed-time prayer to you, beloved Jesus. Please, send me a happy night, protect me from sudden, unexpected death and eternal damnation. Be merciful to my sinful self. I strike my chest thrice. Let the names of Christ and the Virgin be blessed. In the name of the Father, etc. Amen.

(MAAE 4, 138)

Similar stylistic patterns were applied in offerings-prayers connected with the morning liminality of the ordinary diurnal-nocturnal cycle, as well as with phases of the annual cycle. All of them expressed a request for mercy in critical temporal moments, whose extraordinary quality was encoded in ritual utterance. Its magic power (*orenda*) weakened the ambivalent nature of this time and led to accomplishment of the desired aim – enchanting life.

Tabooing time remains in direct relationship with ritualization of the evening *temps de passage*: as a magic safeguard against danger,⁴⁷ a system of lessening ambivalence,⁴⁸ and of the preservation of the prototypical liminal situation⁴⁹ of creation of the time of beginning. The evening taboo manifests the cumulation of a few complementary orders pertaining to the general idea of *ars bene moriendi*, which organizes the totality of an individual's verbal and non-verbal reactions in the marginal time of nightfall. Taboo, understood after C. Lévi-Strauss as meaningful prohibition,⁵⁰ gives prominence to basic characteristic of this time: decline leading finally to total standstill (Night) and regeneration (morning, Day). As a kind of categorical imperative, taboo served to ensure harmony with the natural order established *in illo tempore*, to reinforce the mystical union of man and cosmos. The realm of the time of end (death) excluded signs of life, which were subordinated to solarism and desirable in the morning. They comprised various activities of rotary motion, for example sweeping (manifestation of creation, building), as well as beginning anything (for instance cutting a slice of bread), adorning oneself (for example putting flowers into girls' hair) – i.e. shaping one's new personality, character,

social role. The violation of recommended patterns of behavior always brought unfavorable consequences: sweeping after sunset caused loss of happiness, “sweeping” somebody (the host or a guest) out of a house. Among Eastern Slavs this taboo broadens to include the whole period of the withering of time, in which the vector of life gradually approaches the vector of death: “they say: if you sweep the floor in the afternoon, you will sweep away the host” (*Obieriegi* 10, 34). It was also prohibited both to weave and to leave cloth on a loom for the night: lest domestic animals (cows, swine, hens) would not return to their household before dark (PES 236) and lest inhabitants of the house would die. Work started in the morning should be concluded by nightfall (PES 236): otherwise it signified lack of whole, of closing, the magic of Alkmena +. If a barn is being built after sunset its grain would be eaten by mice (*MAAE* 7, 34, 155), eating a loaf of bread should not be started in the evening (if a slice is cut off, it should be stuck to the rest to make the loaf look full – *Wisła* 17, 278; *Afan Żw* 169). Seeds sown after twilight would grow into a crop eaten later by worms (*Glog bp* 160, 2; also 171, 1), a girl adorning her hair with flowers in that time would either marry a widower or become a spinster (*Wisła* 4, 390). In day-time such flowers, put into the hair of exclusively unmarried women (*Kolb* 33, 50-1), were regarded as a kind of lightning-rod defending against bewitched eyes, warding off evil forces (*Mosz KIS* 2, 1, 325), but primarily as emblems of life. A. N. Afanasjew indicated this symbolism of flowers and stressed the relationship between the notions of shining (*swietit'*) and blooming (*cwiesti*), leading to myths about the creation of the world and the heavenly flowers of Perun waking earth to give birth to all plants and creatures.⁵¹ Putting signs of life under a taboo in the time of death (dangerous for man) is also illustrated by the conviction that after nightfall one should not leap up lest some misfortune is brought. It is exemplified by the following tale recorded in a village from the region of Kielce (in central Poland):

Years ago two peasant watchmen left their houses after sunset to perform their task. They started to jump for fun, and suddenly they

heard a noise and saw some object flying from the nearby forest towards the village. This bogey was black and shaped like a haystack. The peasants, frightened by it, quickly escaped home.

(ZWAK 9, 65)

Securing a happy future through tabooing the time of twilight is conspicuous also in widespread prohibitions to give away – borrow, sell, throw away – anything from the house, not to violate a sense of wholeness, completeness, not to perform a symbolic opening.⁵² Folk beliefs determined the right way of behavior. For example Eastern Slavs were convinced one should not pay money back for the night – lest it would not hold to the house, as illustrated by the following *memorate*: “We bought a cow. Our strongly superstitious old grandmother ordered us to bring money just before sunset and to lead the cow along the lanes at night. She was throwing salt into its hoof-prints and spitting on them” (Mag etik 11, 38). In the area of Tarnów (southern Poland) people were warned neither to let out a sold cow, a bull, a boar at that time, nor to engage a farmhand (Kolb 48, 284). This taboo was based upon the idea of fullness as magic closing: the cumulation of the ambivalent qualities of the evening time of passage (as the time of both end and beginning) is evidenced by ample ethnographic material – Polish, Eastern and Southern Slavic.⁵³ Thorough analysis of its tabooed objects confirmed the validity of the principal idea of the potential, creation of life being inherent in the time of end. In terms of this symbolism, all tabooed objects become mythical essential categories of passage: milk, cheese, eggs, salt, bread, yeast, flour, fire, as well as products of utilitarian, commercial or apotropaic value – sources of prosperity (see also the symbolism of refuse). This interpretation is further confirmed by sanctions against breaking the taboo: cows would die, go blind, lose their milk or would milk poorly (Kolb 15, 125; direct ethno-explanation by analogy: to give milk to a dying person results in making the cow lose it – ZWAK 5, 119), hens would not lay eggs. In terms of folk ontology, rational, practical values are amalgamated here with irrational ones, to form two inseparable circles: the economic one and its derivative – the symbolic one.⁵⁴

The symbolism of twilight as the time of end with immanent potential beginning requires abiding absolutely by the taboo (strongly manifest in all Slavic folklore)⁵⁵ in reference to ambivalent mediating creatures of the passage into life, placed between non-being and being: babies, chickens, foals, lambs, calves, etc. Unfavorable consequences were always imminent in magic opening: for example, if one looked after sunset into a nest, its nestlings would be eaten by ants (*ZWAK* 1, 104). A build-up of two beginnings denotes simultaneously the intensification of mediating properties of the period and the necessity of increased watchfulness. Widespread prohibitions on babies concerned objects in direct contact with them (contagious magic): cradle, baby clothing, bed-clothes (when not taken home before sunset, they should be left outside for the whole night until brought home only after the following sunrise – Kolb 42, 393) and bathing-water. In terms of ethno-explanation this denoted an all-in broadening of the range of prohibition of change, of magic opening: the child's good luck would be given away – it would fall sick or be in fits of weeping on the intervention of the demoniacal creature evoking cry, inimical to babies and pregnant women, running in the evening from farmyard to farmyard (Kolb 21, 146-7). Her harmful actions might be prevented by means of charms made just in this ambivalent time, comprising both evil and good features. At sunset a mother went with her child outdoors, to the field, or approached a window, and said: "Praise be to Jesus Christ," and answered herself: "For ever and ever. Amen." Then facing the setting sun, she said thrice the magic formula:

Venus
you are three stars;
of the morning,
of the noon,
and of the evening.
Take crying away from my child,
return his sleep.

(Was Jag 228; also *Wisła* 3, 511)

A shortened form of this formula focussed exclusively on triple apostrophic address and concretized wish: "Venus // you are three stars // Take crying away from my child" (*Wisła* 3, 511), or on intensifying the request through explicit indication of a desired aim: "The three stars of Venus // [...] // Take away my child's crying, sighing, // and send it good sleep" (*Wisła* 15, 75).

This complex magic act – performed at the close of the day, to the evening star prolonging diurnal light – was meant to liberate positive forces and annihilate the evil consequences of infringing the taboo. The magico-religious essence of this act constituted the ritualistic protection, the power guaranteeing restoration of the initial order. The examples discussed above prove the time of nightfall to be both independent magic and a stage in the sun's diurnal-nocturnal course.

Unfriendly properties of the phase of twilight derive from a general conviction about the demoniacal nature of borders, especially of the border between light and darkness which demarcated the limit of God's power (desacralization of time) and the beginning of the Devil's domain. It was believed that by day one cannot fall into a devil's power, unless voluntarily, that it holds from evening until midnight when, with the crowing of the first cock, an evil ghost turns into pitch (Kolb 48, 267). In folk mentality, the origin of the Devil's grip upon people was of crucial significance for its development and essence; its real impact depended upon one's actions during twilight:

On seeing that [...] he can have a disadvantageous influence upon man's prosperity, happiness and health, he is sometimes feared more than God. People avoid irritating and spiting him, as they are sure that when infuriated, he would take revenge and they would be defeated in unequal fight with him.

(Kolb 21, 161)

Abiding by the taboo of setting dogs on somebody after sunset ensured peace and safety: if such a dog attacked in darkness a devil, extremely active at that time, he would severely avenge himself (Kolb 33, 111). Peace and safety were secured also by following the prohibition on opening windows: this was the time

of plentiful spirits roaming, and if an evil one was encountered, he immediately got inside (Kolb 33, 111). Numerous demoniacal motifs, preserved especially in folk prose, illustrate the taboo of remaining in the open space by man and things in direct contact with him. This space is full of diverse devilish creatures whose predicates (terrifying, strangling, drowning, misleading, etc.) are sanctions against infringing the natural order (the cosmic pattern of the evening dying of light, leading to its rebirth in the morning, corresponds to withering of life).

The system of meanings inherent in the evening scenario emphasized the permanent potentiality of growing dangers, concurrent with an individual's increasing separation. The evening meal was the last token of one's bond with his/her community in the domestic space: everybody goes to sleep after supper; as everyone gets to bed after supper, it is like a good mother (Nkp 3, 663). These proverbs stress the law of reversed symmetry and imply a sequence of semantic connotations immanent in the thematic formula "I go to sleep," essential to the liminal phase of nightfall. The supper, happening at the end of time, of man's diurnal course, functions as a mediator (between life and death) with the temporal vector of passage inherent in it. On both cosmic and anthropological levels, the last daily meal, like the first, morning one, refers to ritual meanings of consuming, of the symbolic sacrifice of life. As a sign of communion with God, it guarantees the reproduction of the mythical paradigm of resurrection (the Last Supper). However, its appearance in the evening *temps de passage* introduces magical evaluation of this temporal border, the fusion of elements of life and death. To ensure reaggregation, it was necessary to abide by the alimentary taboo: to eat little for supper and much for lunch (Nkp 3, 663). In short texts of folklore the last daily meal was presented mostly *expressis verbis*, as a warning against the consequences of breaking the prohibition: big supper makes sleep restless, small supper makes it peaceful (Nkp 3, 663). This taboo is sometimes expressed in terms of black humor:

Highlander, highlander, your wife died
 She had stuffed herself with noodles yesterday for supper.
 (ZWAK 12, 75, 145)

The same idea was conveyed in the following proverb: eating little for supper makes one live long (Nkp 1, 855, 117). Thus, evening was the time for chewing rather than for eating – a recapitulation, the slow decay of all manifestations of life.⁵⁶ All diurnal meals, including the evening one, were conditioned by etiquette: special rules and prohibitions regulating the amount of food consumed, the tempo of eating and the attitude taken during this process. They have been preserved particularly in proverbs, which also in this respect were a manifestation of folk outlook. Its essence was expressed in the following saying: One does not live to eat, but eats to live (Nkp 1, 855, 138; see also Latin *Oportet esse, ut vivas, non vivere, ut edas*). The content and development of life was determined by the etiquette of consuming (sign of life): one who eats by a chimney will not avoid misfortune (Nkp 1, 847, 107); one who is slow at eating, is probably slow at work in the fields, too (Nkp 1, 845, 111; see also Nkp 1, 855, 118; *Wisła* 10, 353; 12, 309; 18, 123). This metaphorical-metonymic relationship had a rational basis, strengthened by religious fasting and a peculiar quality of festive time.

For liminal time it was essential to weaken its ambivalent nature and to constantly give prominence to elements of life – which led to achieving a desired practical aim. Hence the structural identity of the times of daybreak and nightfall, manifested in the ideological unity of their ritual acts enchanting life in these crucial phases. Ritualistic repetition increased their power. This outlook was inherent also in folk customs connected naturally with the regeneration of life: in sexual contacts and healing. Many folk songs, in particular, define the temporal frame of erotic contacts: to make love from evening till morning (Kolb 6, 207, 395). They highlight the border phases of this activity: the morning time –

visit me in the morning
come straight, straight along a high road
visit me, and I will not be resistant

(Kolb 6, 159, 314),

and especially the evening time, when the secrecy of meetings of a young man and a young woman followed logically from the mystery of the creation of life. Such contacts were however forbidden for unmarried youth by Church teachings:

John, come to me in the evening,
The door will not be shut.

(Kolb 12, 186, 353; see also 6, 463, 700; 18, 165, 289)

My young pretty woman
keep your windows open,
as I will arrive,
on horseback when dark.

(Kolb 19, 167, 537; see also 19, 12, 27)

Following the thesis put forward by M. Bakhtin, R. Caillois and R. Tomicki, such periodical infringement of norms,⁵⁷ culturally conditioned, anticipated and sanctioned, might be interpreted on the level of symbolic archaic behavior as the ritualistic sacrifice of life in ambiguous time, requiring the magic protection of both man and cosmos (solarism). Its efficacy (for the period of a single diurnal-nocturnal cycle) was ensured by repetitive actions – according to the mythical pattern and sacral vision of the world lying at the foundation of all recurrence:⁵⁸

She let me kiss her in the evening to sleep well,
And again in the morning to remember it.

(Kolb 19, 97, 316)

A variant of this formula comes in a common proverb: it is better to make love in the evening to sleep well, and again in the morning to remember it.⁵⁹ Folk erotic texts were axionormative: they preserved echoes of the traditional timing of sexual contacts in spite of appearances of their total spontaneity:

Love at noon
is false-hearted,
Morning and evening
are appropriate time for love.

(Kolb 25, 502)

love a captain,
A major in the evening, and a lord in the morning.

(ZWAK 15, 81, 4)

I wanted to make love
with Mary in the evening,
with Kate in the morning,
In the best time.

(ZWAK 12, 166, 26)

The frequent direct indication of fertility in such contacts further validates our former thesis about the ritualistic sacrifice of life in critical phases of the sun's diurnal course: morning – the time of beginning, evening – the time of end (ZWAK 9, 215-16, 131).

The structural identity of the mediating phases of daybreak and nightfall and their peculiar magico-ritualistic significance are conspicuous also in charms which, according to folk beliefs, have a decisive impact upon human fate. The imperative to reproduce exactly a complex magic act on the borders of both light and darkness and darkness and light, was expected to yield a positive result, because of the contact of the Other World with This World taking place then. The identical effect was created by the triple repetition of such an act in three subsequent phases of transition (dawn, noon, twilight) comprising the complete diurnal-nocturnal cycle: *dies naturalis* (from sunrise to sunrise). The efficacy of this magic was founded upon the conviction that, as M. Lurker framed it, all good things go in threesomes.⁶⁰ In charms, like in many other ritual texts, a textual temporal index of the situation highlighted ritualistic reproduction: e.g. to heal a lichen one should smear it with dew before sunrise and after sunset and utter an appropriate formula of incantation (Bieg Llp 119; Kolb 42, 333).

The ambivalence of diurnal-nocturnal times of passage created conditions not only for positive rituals ("white" magic), but also for negative ones ("black" magic). Putting somebody to

death through singing was an example of this: it appears in Polish ethnographic-folkloric sources mainly in records from the area of Mazury (north-eastern Poland). According to S. Biegeleisen, this maleficent magic was of Indo-European origin; it was widespread among Romance peoples and Germans who called *Mortbete* those who brought about others' death through prayers (*abbeten*).⁶¹ Thus, it was believed that

if one is exasperated by somebody and desires this person's death, he/she should sing a religious song in the morning and in the evening and the hated person will certainly die.

(*Wisła* 6, 397)

This general idea had its precise executive scenario:

To sing a psalm (94, it seems) thrice backwards for the whole year at six o'clock every morning and every evening, in the same place and attitude. Each time the sung psalm should be concluded with the Lord's Prayer, and for the third time – also with the word "Amen." If the praying person fails to strictly follow the prescribed time, place or attitude, or makes a mistake – the death befalls him/her, instead of the hated person. After a year, on the last day of praying, the death must come. According to M. Toeppen, the source of this story, many people fall ill and die out of mere tremendous fright. These prayers are usually said in a basement (*Wielbark*). Singing to death is also popular and widespread in the area of Szczytno.

(*Wisła* 6, 397)

The performance rigors (inversion) of this peculiar verbal spell pointed to its direct aim – sending somebody to the Other World,⁶² as well as to the associational spatio-temporal symbolism specifying the character of this sacrificial prayer. Its practical negative intention – provoking the death of a strongly-disliked person – determined the nature of the entire ritual. Attempts at disturbing the universal harmony, at creating an anti-world, always remained in the realm of infernal magic, were against the natural law, and such aim was to be achieved by applying a backward, inverse scenario. Its Christian side – the evocation of a daily prayer and most probably of Psalm 94 (on calling for justice) – fundamental for this ritual of "black"

incantation – guaranteed liberation of the power (orenda) inherent in the magic act. In this Psalm, vengeance is claimed to belong to God who will judge depravity – hence a plea for theophany. The use of religious texts to magically multiply the power and effect of words was characteristic of the structure of a complex magic act. However, their impact was predominantly positive and only occasionally negative. This instrumental treatment of religion, when applied to achieve evil ends, brought actions against its underlying idea: protection of the divine gift of life, which took the topmost position also in the folk hierarchy of values. Thus singing to death functioned as a kind of punishment for breaking the harmony of social coexistence – restoring order in God's name.

The ambivalent nocturnal-diurnal times of passage, manifesting the struggle between the forces of darkness and light, between two antithetical demiurges, were connected with other phenomena of the realms of life and death – weather forecasts, on which the crop (an element of life) was dependent. These external signs of communication between the cosmos and man as its full-fledged component could take place during *temps de passage*. Their hidden potential of a new state materialized as distinct recurrent signals, predictions (observable in the morning and in the evening). Forecasts – an extremely important category of folk communication – concerned natural states (of the sun, stars, dew) and repetitive patterns of human behavior, for example a prophetic sneeze, stumble, itch, ringing in the ears. They were evaluated positively or negatively according to qualities attributed by folk tradition to the morning and evening marginal times. And here we reach the central element of folk ontology in the diurnal-nocturnal cycle: the relationship between “Man's voice” (forms of human contact with the cosmos by means of various ritualistic micro- and macrostructures) and “Nature's voice” articulated in omens. Following the logic of participation,⁶³ these forms regulate the coexistence of This World with the Other World, as well as testify to the structural parallelism of times of passage. Forecasts enabled the most favorable adaptation to a new state, and magico-ritual forms

provoked the best desired solutions. This dialogue was permanently controlled by a developed axionormative system which secured man's harmonious existence in both This World and the Other World. Verbal and non-verbal semantics of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle is obvious to those living by traditional cultural values and reflects the principal ideas of the folk model of man and the world. Its central message – for the time of both morning beginning and evening end – was the idea of a new beginning: "O Lord! include my name in the book of life," but also "O Lord! remember me, when I enter Your kingdom! Amen" (Winog Zo 90, 118).

NOTES

¹ K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler: *Mały słownik teologiczny*, trans. T. Mieszkowski, P. Pachciarek, Introduction A. Skowronek, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1987, p. 180.

² See B. A. Uspieński: *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi*, trans. E. Janus and others, Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1985, p. 106-7.

³ See K. Wrocławski: *List z Nieba czyli epistola o niedzieli*, Warszawa: Fundacja "Myśl," 1991, p. 58.

⁴ Afanasjew points to the complementary source of viewing fire as a rich person: its mythical association with gold and wealth in general. See A. N. Afanasjew: "Stichija swieta w jej poetyckich przedstawieniach," in A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywąca woda i wieszczęte słowo*, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Rossija, 1988, p. 177.

⁵ See M. Mauss: "Zarys ogólnej teorii magii," in M. Mauss: *Socjologia i antropologia*, part. 1, trans. M. Król and others, Introduction C. Lévi-Strauss, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973, p. 153-5.

⁶ M. Eliade: "Human Existence and Sanctified Life," in M. Eliade: *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, trans. W. Trask, New York: Harper and Row, 1957, p. 179.

⁷ See F. D. Klimczuk: "Zapadnopolesskije 'russkije' molitwy," in *Etnolingwistika tekstów. Siemiotika małych form folkloru I. Tezisy i przedwaritielnyje materialy k sympoziumu*, Moskwa: Akademia Nauk SSSR, 1988, p. 185-7.

⁸ D. Benedyktowicz, Z. Benedyktowicz: "Symbolika domu w tradycji ludowej," part 2, *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1990, no. 4, p. 12-15. See also D. Benedyktowicz, Z. Benedyktowicz: *Dom w tradycji ludowej*, Wrocław: Wiedza o kulturze, 1992.

⁹ D. Benedyktowicz, Z. Benedyktowicz: "Symbolika domu...", p. 14.

¹⁰ See, for example the following archival materials: Archives of University of Perm, Archives of Chair of Folkloristics University of Moscow, Archives of Polesie Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, and numerous published collections of texts of complex magic acts: W. N. Dobrowolskij: *Smolenskij etnograficzeskij sbornik*, part 1, Sankt-Petersburg: 1891, part 3: 1894; L. N. Majkow: *Wielikoruskije zaklinanija*, Sankt-Petersburg: 1869; N. Winogradow: *Zagowory, obieriegi, spasitielnyje molitwy i procz*, Sankt-Petersburg: 1907; A. Wietuchow: "Zagowory, zaklinanija, obieriegi i drugije widy narodnego wraczerwaniya osnovannye na wiere w siłu słowa," *Russkij Filologiczeskij Wiestnik*, 1901-1907; P. Jefimienko: *Sbornik malorossijskich zaklinanij*, Moskwa: 1874; E. Romanow: "Zagowory, apokrify i duchowye stichi," in *Bieloruskij sbornik*, 5 ed., Witebsk: 1891, p. 1-211 and others.

¹¹ See A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda...*, p. 345-6.

¹² *Życie chrześcijanina w obrzędach Kościoła. Modlitewnik liturgiczny*, compiled by K. Thullie, ed. for adults, Lwów: Książnica-Atlas, 1925, p. 10.

¹³ *Bóg Najwyższe Dobro czyli Mowa serca nabożnego chrześcijanina*, Wrocław: W. B. Korn, 1809, p. 28.

¹⁴ *Dzień Chrześcijanina czyli modlitwy codzienne i rozmyślenia o powinnościach i cnotach chrześcijan*, [Lwów]: 1834, p. 14.

¹⁵ *Główne prawdy wiary oraz obowiązki chrześcijanina*, compiled by P. Humbert, trans. I. Bardziński, Warszawa: druk XX Misjonarzy, 1842, p. 447.

¹⁶ *Zbiór wybornego i gruntownego nabożeństwa na codzienne, tygodniowe, miesięczne, w czasy przygodne, w dni święte, roczne i około świętych sakramentów podzielonego*, ed. 3, Warszawa: druk XX Misjonarzy, 1807, p. 6.

¹⁷ See A. Brückner: *Literatura religijna w Polsce średniowiecznej*, vol. 3, Warszawa: P. Laskauer, 1904, p. 152-9; also W. Wydra, W. R. Rzepka: *Chrestomatia staropolska. Teksty do r. 1543*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1984, p. 355-6.

¹⁸ D. Forstner: *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. and ed. W. Zakrzewska and others, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990, p. 471.

¹⁹ W. P. Pietrow: "Zagowory," ed. A. N. Martynowa, in *Iz istorii russkoj sowietskoj folkloristiki*, Leningrad: 1981, p. 109.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²¹ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 406.

²² *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. X. Leon-Dufour, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1990, p. 272.

²³ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 407.

²⁴ See P. Tillich: "Symbol religijny," in *Symbole i symbolika*, selection and Introduction M. Głowiński, trans. G. Borkowska and others, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1990, p. 167-8.

²⁵ *Bóg Najwyższe Dobro...*, p. 117.

²⁶ *Główne prawdy wiary...*, p. 447.

²⁷ See M. Lurker: *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1989, p. 103.

²⁸ S. G. F. Brandon: "The Significance of Time in Some Ancient Initiatory Rituals," in *Initiation. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions*, ed. C. J. Bleeker, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965, p. 47; see also R. A. Barclay: "New Testament Baptism. An External or Internal Rite?" in *Initiation...*, p. 171-83.

²⁹ See J. S. Pasierb: *Czas otwarty*, Pelplin: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 1992, p. 62.

³⁰ See T. Špidlik: *U źródeł światłości. Podręcznik życia chrześcijańskiego*, trans. J. Zychowicz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów, 1991, p. 85.

³¹ See e.g. *Leksykon symboli*, ed. M. Oesterreicher-Mollwo, trans. J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa: ROK Corporation SA, 1992, p. 97. On multi-layered semantics of number twelve see D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 51-3.

³² See K. W. Heckowa: *Pod znakiem świętego słońca. Dawne wierzenia śląskie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1961, p. 57.

³³ M. Lurker: *op. cit.*, p. 53.

³⁴ D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 47-8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁶ See *Leksykon symboli...*, p. 113.

³⁷ See, for example, collections of texts of complex magic acts in the Archives of Polesie Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences; also L. N. Majkow: *op. cit.*, p. 516; Archives of Chair of Folkloristics University of Moscow; W. N. Dobrowolskij: *op. cit.*, p. 661.

³⁸ J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant: *Dictionnaire des symboles, mythes, rêves, coutumes, gestes, formes, figures, couleurs, nombres*, Paris: Seghers, Jupiter, 1973, vol. 3.

³⁹ *Sam na sam z Panem Jezusem czyli pokarm anielski dla dusz pragnących miłości Bożej. Różne modlitwy...*, ed. 4, Kraków: [after 1910], p. 127.

⁴⁰ *Tradycja apostolska*, 42, quoted after J. Salij: "Krzyż znakiem rozpoznawczym chrześcijan," in J. Salij: *Poszukiwania w wierze*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Prowincji Dominikanów "W drodze," 1991, p. 44.

⁴¹ *Złoty ołtarzyk wonnego kadzenia przed Stolicą Bożą to jest modlitwy rozmaite, które duch gorący na wonność Panu Bogu słodkości chwały jego ofiarować może, z przydatkiem niektórych nabożnych pieśni*, 1821, p. 694-6; see also "Modlitewnik Siostry Konstancji (1527). Zbiór modlitw, nauk i rozmyślań," in W. Wydra, W. Rzepka: *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁴² On Christian introduction to complex magic acts see, for example W. I. Charitonowa: "Žanrowaja diffierencyacyja zagoworno-zaklinatelnoj

poezii, *Filologiczeskije Nauki*, 1988, no. 4, p. 7-12; W. Charitonowa: "Zagoworno-zaklinatielnyj tekst: kompozycyonnyje osnovy, wozdejstwie na pacyenta i zaklinatiela," *Filologiczeskije Nauki*, 1991, no. 5, p. 45-54.

⁴³ See e.g. F. Kotula: *Znaki przeszłości. Odchodzące ślady zatrzymać w pamięci*, Introduction C. Hernas, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1976, p. 414, 439, 450, 454-5.

⁴⁴ See J. S. Bystron: "Łańcuch szczęścia," in J. S. Bystron: *Tematy, które mi odradzano. Pisma etnograficzne rozproszone*, ed. L. Stomma, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1980, p. 74; the oldest record of "Sen Najświętszej Panny" – *Wisła*, vol. 4, p. 499.

⁴⁵ J. S. Bystron: *op. cit.*, p. 77 and others.

⁴⁶ See F. Kotula: *Folklor słowny osobliwy Lasowiaków, Rzeszowiaków i Podgórczan*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1969, p. 88.

⁴⁷ A. van Gennep: *Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom, G. L. Caffee, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 117.

⁴⁸ E. Leach: "Anthropological Aspects of Abuse," in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. E. H. Lenneberg, Cambridge (Mass.): 1964, quoted after J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii*, Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1989, p. 56.

⁴⁹ J. S. Wasilewski's book *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii* is the most comprehensive study of taboo in Polish traditional culture – its author's argument is conveyed in terms of symbolic anthropology. On infringement of the taboo of symbolic *communitas* – an aspect of the model set by creation of the world – *ibid.* p. 119 and others.

⁵⁰ C. Lévi-Strauss: *Myśl nieoswojona*, trans. A. Zajaczkowski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969, p. 150-2.

⁵¹ A. N. Afanasjew: *Dieriewo żyzni*, Moskwa: 1983, quoted after W. I. Połunina: *Odoleń-trawa. Estieticzeskije wospitanije dietiej i подрошков w obszczenii s narodnym iskusstwom*, Moskwa: Ministierstwo Kulturi SSSR, 1989, p. 49.

⁵² J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 109.

⁵³ See for example the semantic opposition open/closed and its derivatives in Balkan model of the world: T. W. Cywjan: *Lingwisticeskije osnovy balkanskoj modieli mira*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1990, p. 114 and others.

⁵⁴ On inseparable connection of rational and ritualistic actions see B. N. Putiłow, G. Strobach: "Wwiedienije," in *Narodnyje znanija. Folklor. Narodnoje iskusstwo*, vol. 4, Moskwa: Nauka, 1991, p. 7 and others.

⁵⁵ See T. W. Cywjan: *op. cit.*, p. 179 and others.

⁵⁶ See S. Symotiuk: "Struktura i status egzystencjalny zmierzchu wieczornego" (manuscript).

⁵⁷ See R. Tomicki: "Norma, wzór, wartość w życiu seksualnym tradycyjnych społeczności wiejskich w Polsce," *Etnografia Polska*, 1977, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 55; also D. Wężowicz-Ziółkowska: *Miłość ludowa: wzory*

miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII-XX wieku, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1991, p. 39 and others.

⁵⁸ See J. Bartmiński: "O rytualnej funkcji powtórzenia w folklorze. Przyczynek do poetyki sacrum," in *Sacrum w literaturze*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1983, p. 257-66.

⁵⁹ See J. S. Bystron: "Pieśń o pani i doktorze," in J. S. Bystron: "Wpływy pieśni szlacheckich w poezji ludowej," *Lud*, 1924, vol. 23, p. 122-3.

⁶⁰ M. Lurker: *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁶¹ H. Biegeleisen: *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego*, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1929, p. 56.

⁶² On peculiar nature of the Other World see J. S. Wasilewski: *Podróże do piekieł. Rzecz o szamańskich misteriach*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1979, p. 128 and others; J. S. Wasilewski: "Po śmierci wędrować. Szkic z zakresu etnologii świata znaczeń (I)," *Teksty*, 1979, no. 3, p. 97-120; (II), *Teksty*, 1979, no. 4, p. 58-84.

⁶³ See L. Lévy-Bruhl: "Prawo partycypacji," in L. Lévy-Bruhl: *Czynności umysłowe w społeczeństwach pierwotnych*, trans. B. Szwarzman-Czarnota, Introduction E. Tarkowska, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1992, p. 94-134.

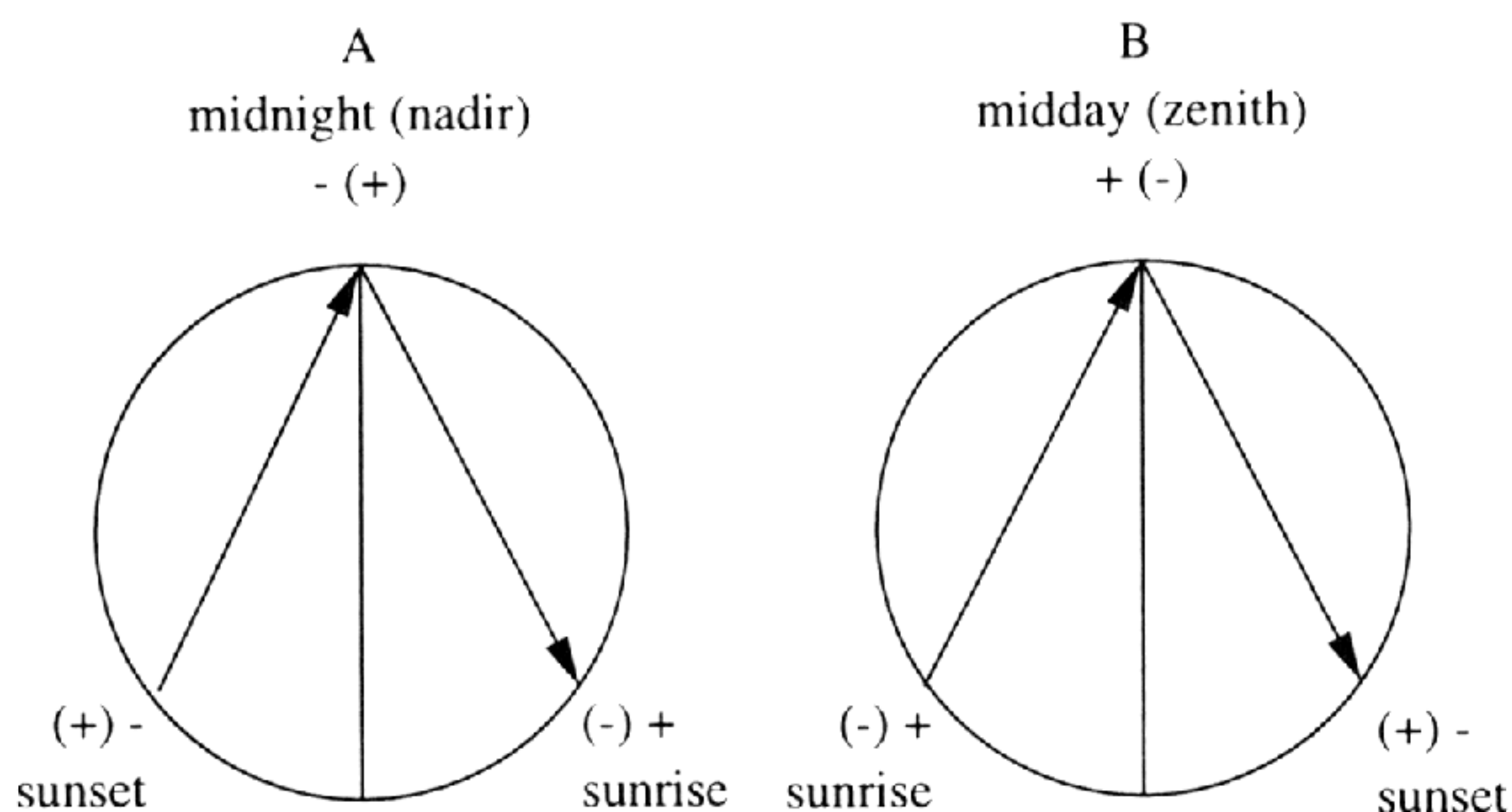
CHAPTER VI

THE TIME OF THE CENTER AND THE SUPERIOR REALM (THE MIDDAY CULMINATION)

What is necessary for a good noon?
Nothing.
Because everything necessary
Is inherent in a good noon.
(Folf Pzl 295, 1, 361)

Apart from the border phases of daybreak and nightfall, the segmentation of time of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle expressed in verbal and non-verbal signs of folklore, comprises also the central stages of midday and midnight. Their axiological significance is determined by a sequence of mythical oppositions correlated around the pair of divine creators, antithetical demiurges – the solarized God and the Prince of Darkness, the Devil – and their permanent competition with each other. M. Eliade asserts the center to be an ideal point: it belongs to the sacred space, it is the point of trichotomous communication among Earth, Heaven and Hell, of the intersection of these realms – the place from which one may leave the mundane reality. On the temporal level this transcendence consists in the accomplishment of *stasis* – the eternal timeless present,¹ the time of communion with gods and the strongest emanation of their power. In both spatial and temporal terms the center indicates the principal polarity of the sacred: the positive phase of midday and the negative phase of midnight. The sacred sphere of the diurnal solstice of light (the zenith, noon) and of the nocturnal

solstice of darkness (the nadir, midnight) constitutes the principal system of reference for the evaluation of other temporal units placed between the liminal and central stages of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle. Those preceding midday display growing positive semantic and those following it – diminishing positive semantic, and respectively, those preceding midnight reveal increasing negative semantic and those following it – decreasing negative semantic. This is explained by diagrams A and B:



The morning victory of light leads to its gradual intensification (the upward vector, progress) and the appropriate semantic of time: noon, zenith, the strongest emanation of power, followed by the gradual withering of time (the downward vector, reversion). Likewise, the evening victory of darkness results in its growing intensity culminating in midnight, nadir, which predicts a crucial transformation bringing about new triumph of light. Thus, midnight, the center of night, is the starting point of the creation of time, and midday, the center of day, is the starting point of its gradual destruction. Light and warmth constitute the kernel of positive meanings: moving away from this center weakens positive qualities and strengthens negative ones.²

Folk temporal consciousness, illustrated by the diagrams above, was reflected in beliefs, forecasts and prescriptions to

achieve happiness (omens of good and evil). For example: it is good if a spider descends on his web before noon, and if he does it after midday – it portends evil (Kolb 42, 404); a hen's crowing on the threshold after noon is an evil omen, believed to "crow away" a peasant, his wife or their children from the house (Kolb 31, 152; with the mediating function of the threshold); as flax blooms before midday, it should not be sown in the afternoon (*MAAE* 7, 45, 120). The time before noon passed towards the full growth, life; and after noon – towards the gradual extinction of vitality. The forenoon was the best time for lending (giving out, opening – see chapter V). Later, a housewife was reluctant to lend, lest this made her suffer from leg-ache. Things should be given back at the same time in the morning as borrowed, lest the lender becomes ill-fated, her stored food gets mildewy or spoilt (Frank Zm 58). Forenoon time gave positive meaning to events, and afternoon time – negative. To sleep or lie in bed till noon was morally censurable, disturbed the social harmony (see the imperative to get up with the first blush of day):

When I came to my beloved at midday,
She was still lying in bed.
A girl who does not get up before noon,
Does not make a good housewife.

(Kadł ZbO 59)

The division of liminal nocturnal time into two stages – before and after midnight – was primarily connected with the idea of mystical guard which was inherent in magico-ritualistic verbal forms programming a safe passage to the state of diurnal activity. See, for example, the following bed-time private prayer:

I go to sleep.
Alone?
Not alone –
with three angels.
One lights me,
The second makes my bed,
The third guards my soul in my body.
He protects it till midnight,

And afterwards it is guarded by Jesus Christ himself
And all saints...

(Kot Znp 467-8; also 110-12)

The center of potential threats – the strongest emanation of the powers of darkness and evil – is simultaneously a crisis announced by the solar sound signal predicting the unquestionable victory of light. Solarism constitutes the axis determining elementary temporal structures of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, revealing fundamental principles of symbolic imagination. This axis connects the Superior Realm and time of Heaven, White God, identified with sunrise and noon with the Inferior Realm and time of Hell, Black God, associated with sunset, the northern sphere (see the proverb: noontime suits an eagle, and night an owl – *Wisła* 13, 615). Such semanticizing of directions, spatial coding of time and temporal coding of space, typical of folk mentality,³ is reflected for instance in Bulgarian beliefs calling the south wind white and the north – black (Afan *Żw* 139), or in the Polish proverb warning of sowing with the north wind which deprives the seed of the force to grow (Nkp 3, 174, 33). This stratification also reflects the astronomical semantic proportion of the moments of the sun's zenith at noontide and nadir at midnight.⁴

Dichotomous modelling of the world in terms of these binary oppositions (peculiar to folk imagination), applied to diurnal-nocturnal temporality, coordinates temporal borders (day-break, nightfall) and central phases (midday, midnight). L. Stomma regards annual and diurnal-nocturnal moments of transition (midnight, midday, twilight, dawn) as homogeneous.⁵ Analogously, Tomicki treats them as border phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle.⁶ However, their penetrating investigation in the comprehensive context of verbal and non-verbal expressions of traditional mentality proves this homogeneity to be imprecise. It seems more accurate to point to a certain degree of equivalence of these borders and central phases with their autonomous meanings deriving from their association with two opposite orders of the universe: divine and diabolic. The central stages display transition within one quality (light or darkness) of

varying degree of internal semanticizing (see diagrams A and B), whereas the structure of border phases posits mediation between the two contradictory elements of qualities. Both boundaries and zenith and nadir (temporal central pillars)⁷ link This World with the Other World: they form the temporal axis enabling communitation among the realms of Heaven, Earth and Hell. Statistical investigations proved the central stages of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle to be the time of strongest appearance and activity of demoniacal beings:⁸

time of appearance of demoniacal creatures %	midday	midnight	daybreak	nightfall	other times	the total
	89	128	53	37	23	330
	27,0	38,8	16,1	11,2	6,9	100

The time of the center, unambiguously different in quality from ordinary duration, was generally considered to belong to the most dangerous phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle (Kolb 7, 41). Its particularly perilous character consisted in the emanation of full power – of light (at midday) or darkness (at midnight) – and did not originate in the time of mediation, as was the case of the passage from light to darkness (twilight) and from darkness to light (dawn). The time of the center was charged with a system of imperatives and prohibitions guaranteeing the social and cosmic order. Any endeavor to secure it, peculiar to this time, was however differentiated within each component of the basic opposition, dominated by the complex symbolism of either the Superior Realm or the Inferior Realm.

Despite the prevalent frequency of cultural facts relating to the time of nadir, the time of zenith – of warmth, full life and implied (desired) prosperity – was the semantic kernel of the folk diurnal-nocturnal cycle. In folk beliefs and behaviors this time was most clearly represented by hyperbolized fullness: blooming corn, summer, harvest – the hierophanic time. The noon was the period of the sun’s “rest” (an “intermission” in its daily journey). Analogous behavior was expected from people, especially during intense summer harvesting, when the sun is the strong-

est.⁹ The cosmic pattern determines here, too, its anthropological counterpart. M. Jousse interpreted this dependence in terms of the mechanism of interaction: a human being is a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm (like a mirror and echo),¹⁰ in the course of his entire life he receives and accumulates representations of characteristic "gestures" of external objects. On the part of the cosmos such interactions are unconscious, whereas men realize and recreate them as tripartite elementary gestures forming an inseparable unity: subject of action – action – object of action (*agent – agissant – agi*). In ethnographic-folkloric sources this anthropological mimesis assumes biblical explication: God ordered people to rest by concluding his six-day act of Creation by establishing the festive day (Sunday), sanctioned by a Commandment in the Decalogue. The ritualistic character of this inactivity was explained to Great Russians by W. Monomach's *Pouczenije* (instructions): "Sleep at noon comes from God. This is the time of rest for animals, birds and people."¹¹

Numerous folkloric materials manifest this unusual time, excluded from rational, normal and diurnal duration. Its characteristics may be represented by the following model and its interrelated implications: non-work – extraordinary space – extraordinary time – death,¹² corresponding to the simple opposition of non-work – non-life – feast. The festive time was situated on the boundary of two spheres of outlook – human and superhuman – which were organically united in traditional mentality. The taboo of work was the fundamental principle determining the nature of this time, which was concisely formulated for example in the following proverb: one who works at noon, will not earn enough for his mortal shirt (*Lud* 14, 370). The sowing season was a departure from this rule: it was recommended to sow just at noon, when people and oxen take a rest from ploughing (*Wisla* 4, 91; also *MAAE* 7, 48; *Lud* 12, 298; 13, 329). The pragmatic motivation, protection of corn against parasites, had a deeper sense of magico-ritualistic creation of a good beginning according to principles of homeopathic magic: full light – good crops. This time was not

exclusively human: as J. Koczwara recorded in materials collected in the area of Zebrzydowice (in southern Poland),

Various strange phenomena happened at midday. For example people noticed a watch flowing at the bottom of a brook, a swimming goose, a drowned man sitting on a footbridge, or a small boy dressed in red. They tempted reckless people to approach water and drowned them.

(*Lud* 17, 69)

Such manifestations of the world turned upside down,¹³ of chaos,¹⁴ put man to the test. His midday actions (like those in the other border stages of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle) were regulated by a logically constructed system of rules of etiquette. It related rational premises to archaic cultic images, as well as to later ones, based on magico-religious syncretism. This cosmic-earthly order was disturbed by heedless people, as well as by those who loitered at noontime instead of taking their dinner (*ZWAK* 2, 59).

The taboo of work naturally expanded to comprise the domestic space (e.g. one should not wash windows at midday lest their window-panes crack in the evening – *ZWAK* 10, 91, 105), as well as the area of agricultural labor (fields, meadows). People were warned not to stay alone in a field at noontime lest they were believed to get strangled by a noon deity embodied as a child wrapped in linen (*Wisła* 16, 623). Another, animistic motivation is founded upon the conviction that ghosts visit the living at certain special times, particularly at noontide. Therefore people neither stay alone in a field nor bathe then (*Wisła* 3, 514). A more strict prohibition concerned mediating places of double significance: balks¹⁵ (*Folf Pzl* 173, 731) and other boundaries. Their susceptibility to demonical beings was intensified by the overlapping of spatial and temporal qualities. Each infringement of a taboo activated irrational forces which mediated among three levels of communication: the Superior Realm, the Middle Realm and the Inferior Realm.

This communication was grounded in a developed taboo system, which determined the quality of time and protected one

from undesirable cratophanies.¹⁶ It comprised primarily a prohibition (a constitutive factor of extraordinary, festive time)¹⁷ of the use of sharp implements, explicitly formulated in folk tales and *memorata* recording superstitions and beliefs, particularly those concerning field and forest demons. For example in the following one, entitled *Jak się chłop bił z południcą* (how a peasant struggled with a noontide deity):

Once a peasant was scything a meadow at midday. Suddenly a noontime divinity came to him, seized his scythe and intended to cut off his head. She rebuked him for working in the field at midday. The peasant, facing death, started to fight with her and took back his scythe. In the meantime it was one o'clock in the afternoon and she had to leave. But the scythe was completely damaged: there was a notch in each place she touched it. On the following day the man bought another scythe in town, but used it only a little and died.

(ZWAK 11, 5-6, 69)

Violation of a taboo meant contamination of the sacred time with death, without a possibility of return to the former state. This message, in reference to the annual macro-cycle, is communicated by the following Eastern Slavic tale:

It was sinful to harrow on Saint Nicholas's Day. Despite this, a peasant went with his six year-old daughter, or even younger, to his field to do this. He told her to harrow and he himself was working with a fork. And then something unexpected happened: a shining creature appeared and said it was forbidden and sinful to harrow on that day, Saint Nicholas's Day, and disappeared. After this, the girl fell ill and was treated. She became insane till the end of her life.

(Charit Czibm 23)

Both these cases display the same paradigm of sacred time, verbalized by a supernatural creature. In Polish folklore the noontime deity assumed the angelic function of both protection and punishment for breach of canonical norms of behavior in festive time. This role of hers was widespread in sermon narratives.¹⁸ Taboo and sin were united by the same kind of development and consequences: both violation of a taboo and committing a sin introduced a state of ritualistic impurity, and

the original order was to be restored through penalty¹⁹ (see meditations on anathema and punishment in chapter V).

Other imperatives and prohibitions pertaining to the time of zenith, too, emphasize its sacral character. They constitute metonymies of death, typical of festive time,²⁰ as for example the order to put out a fire (*MAAE* 4, 107) homologous to a "rest" of the divine fire. The prohibition against the use of sharp tools (sickle, hoe, etc.) at midday co-created festive time (see annual rites) and was directly connected with the prohibition against binding, lest spirits roaming at this time of day get hurt and take revenge (Mosz KIS 2, 2, 264; *Wisła* 8, 756). Binding constituted magic closing, the magic of Alkmena –, precluding return to the original state, setting the wheel of time in motion again. For example, it was forbidden to tie knots in a moribund's shirt lest his passage to the new status in the Other World was rendered impossible. The message of stories about noontide meetings of the living with the dead was primarily didactic: they represented the concepts of just death, salvation, as opposed to eternal damnation, and of initiatory direction toward the Superior Realm. Tales about towns or churches swallowed by the earth warned against the damned, cursed death resulting from violation of norms of life. They were derived from the biblical story about Sodom and Gō-mōr-'rāh (Gen 17, 20; 19, 24, 25, 28), inspired by sermon exempla and transformed according to traditional patterns of thinking. Such tales were most often toponomastically located (see *Lud* 5, 220-5), for instance *Zapadle miasto Chraplewo* (the town of Chraplewo swallowed by the earth):

Chraplewo was a town near the village Zielona Góra (in the area of Szamotuły in western Poland) [...] Even nowadays one can hear there bells tolling underground. Some people claim they saw church towers or women with long braids of hair carrying bunches of keys, who appeared at midday but vanished at the sight of human beings.

(*Wisła* 8, 731)

These cursed realms opened for the living just at noontime, reminding of the consequences of transgression of norms

regulating man's coexistence with nature (see also, for example, the tale *Kościół zapadły w Głębocku* – the church in Głębocek, swallowed by the earth – *Wisła* 8, 744).

Many such tales were based upon the conviction that people were able to help repentant souls in this peculiar time. Their damnation, resulting from nonfulfilment of the moribund rite of passage (see chapter II) could be terminated by the power inherent in the ritualistic gesture of handshake:²¹

A woman resented her daughter's refusal to marry an old, wealthy batchelor. She charmed her with "black" magic from books. This girl has been repenting until now: she appears every noon on the walls surrounding the castle and requires salvation. She may be rescued by holding her hands as long as she metamorphoses from a black into a white lady and the hours of power of evil forces pass.

(*MAAE* 7, 134, 22)

The convention of *memorate* enhances the verisimilitude of such events, which constitute another principle governing the communication between This World and the Other World. It was also sanctioned by the Church which recognized the Angelus, comprising both a description of Christ's Incarnations and the following prayer formula for the dead repeated thrice: "Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, // and let perpetual light shine upon them. // May they rest in peace. Amen." The obligatory nature of these devotions is emphasized by the following cautionary tale delivered by a shepherd in the region of Radom (in central Poland) and quoted by Kolberg, which delineates a vision of eternal damnation:

It was exactly at noontime. The place near the pond where I used to pasture my cattle was frequently haunted. From under the bridge a yellow dog with reddish legs ran out and started to jump over a furrow back and forth. A little later a great number of crows approached and started to circle and attack the dog. Their shrill screech made one feel unpleasant, despite the daytime. Suddenly the dog sprang into the water, out of it, and started to jump again. The crows were flying after the dog and shrieked as if they wanted to tear it to pieces. Suddenly, I heard midday bells tolling in Waśniów and the crows immediately flushed away. The dog yelped dismally, as if hit

hard by a stick, and disappeared somewhere. Old people hold it embodied a man who never recited the Angelus and cursed badly. Therefore he is permanently chased by devils. He takes the shape of a dog for a few hours each day until bells' tolling at noontide are heard; and it will be this dog till Doomsday.

(Kolb 21, 161-2)

Moral teaching conveyed by prose texts of folklore related to noontime favors the Christian system of values. They are meant to help obtain ultimate reward: the open gates of Paradise, the eschatological aim of morning and evening prayers, both canonical and non-canonical. The hierophanic time of fullness of light brought exposure to the Superior Realm, but only for the deserving, just ones, such as for example in the following tale about the symbolic paradisiacal bird-angel, a mediator between Heaven and Earth (T 550 *Ptak złotopióry* – a golden-feathered bird):²²

A monk left his monastery at noontide and strolled in the garden reciting litanies. Suddenly he noticed a very beautiful bird with golden feathers at the beak. When he started to chase it, he forgot about time, but finally caught it.

The bird told him: "If you let me free, pious monk, I will tell you three truths." When liberated, the bird said: "You had me, you set me free and you should know that I am as precious as a hen's egg." And it metamorphosed into an angel and the monk found himself in Eden.

The Angel ordered him to come back to the monastery once more. Upon his return, the monk found everything altered there. He learnt he had been absent from there for 300 years. As none of those living there wanted to recognize him as a monk, he became disappointed with monastic life and asked Jesus for prompt death. This wish being fulfilled, he inaugurated his eternal life in Heaven...

(*Opaszku rajskim. Legenda* «On paradisiacal bird. A Tale» – Kolb 8, 101-2)

The hero of another version of this tale was an ordinary man, a blacksmith named Paszka, who worked for people gratis. Hunting the bird, he was taken upwards, to Paradise, where he spent a hundred years before returning home. Death wore down a hundred pairs of iron shoes questing after him (Kolb 8, 101). An enlightening, vivid description of the road to Heaven (typical

of many fairy-tales – e.g. “The bridge to the Other World”)²³ appeared in the tale *O chłopu w niebie* (A peasant in Heaven – “A dead man invited to a feast”):

A peasant was going along a road and met a poor man, a repentant soul from the Other World. He said: “My brother, what are you doing here? Come and dine with me,” and the other one agreed. As they were travelling together, the stranger was gradually becoming more and more cheerful and respectable.

Upon arrival home, the man requested his wife to prepare a good dinner for himself and the visitor. When they started to eat, the penitent said: “My brother, since you invited me to dinner today, let me invite you to dinner tomorrow (he was from the Other World). You must be ready tomorrow at noontime, as I will send a horse for you. Bid farewell to everybody – your wife, associates, friends, enemies – because you will never return here. When the horse neighs for the first time, mind to be ready to mount it [...].

(Kolb 3, 149-50)

The emissary from the Other World functioned in such joint midday meals as a ritualistic figure, a mediator, a surrogate sacrifice made in this extraordinary time excluded from secular duration. Folk proverbs compare dinner to divine service (Nkp 2, 664): its obligatory solemn silence emphasized the hierophanic nature of this time, which reinforced cultural order and suppressed forces of anarchy. Dinner was the most copious, hot meal eaten in the middle of the day, exactly at noontide (*Wisła* 4, 87; 3, 239; *ZWAK* 10, 91; 17, 23). Its cultish and vegetative symbolism was most prominent during the summer solstice – the period of full light, warmth, the strongest hierophany. The external, pragmatic, rationalized signs of hierophany denoted both desired prosperity and the ambivalent nature of divinity: beneficial and destructive. The ritual function of dinner was indicated by both its time and frame. In the harvesting season this substantial meal consisted of two dishes: a soup and the main dish comprising usually grits or noodles with fat (*Wisła* 18, 94; fat, a strong symbol of life,²⁴ was associated with honey and the sun – Folf Pzl 117). This meal was brought to reapers in two joined pots (*ZWAK* 17, 23; see also symbolism of the number two). An after-dinner repose was also obligatory – see the

proverb: take a rest after dinner, take a walk after supper – though not equivalent to sleep. In daytime, equivalent symbolically to life, the sleep – a sign of night and symbolic death – could appear only in the reduced, substitute form of a nap; folk lore made a clear distinction between sleeping and napping (Kolb 31, 106). This rule was guarded also by midday demons: they killed, mostly by wringing a neck, those infringing it, disturbing indispensable harmony (notice the correspondence of the nature of transgression and punishment). This applied especially in the case of after-dinner violation of the double prohibition – against slumber and work – hence the proverb: sleep after dinner will rarely bring success (Nkp 2, 665).

The original organization of extraordinary noontime and its taboo system comprised also the interdiction of another type of human activity – the taboo of procreation. It was associated with festive time. On Sundays and other festive days many East Carpathian women (*Huculki*) abstained from copulation, lest their souls come under the Devil's power (Kolb 55, 418) – here sex was excluded by the sacred, which tolerates neither sexuality nor any manifestations of fertility.²⁵ This mentality was also preserved in folk erotic texts, directly formulating such imperatives, for instance the song beginning with the incipit: do not love at noontide (Kolb 26, 502). The noon, the strongest emanation of divine power, was thus the “night of physical love.”²⁶

Many other signs of the hierophanic time of zenith (the time of the center as completeness, an attribute of divinity) point to its strongly magical nature, too. It is constituted by the protection of individual life and crops (an indispensable condition of human life): the two values crucial for man, comprised in the semantic field of fullness of time. Such implications are included in the etiquette of the midday greeting – “I wish you good noontime” and the response “I wish you good health” (Kolb 33, 21), and in other magico-ritual forms of enchanting life. On the principle of the magic of similarity, or according to M. Jousse's mechanism of interaction between the micro- and macrocosm,²⁷ folk medicine designated the time of zenith for curing various

human illnesses. For example, to get rid of a swelling one should drink carrot decoction – exclusively at noon (*Lud* 13, 219; the same mechanism of magical influence was applied to healing jaundice by staring at fire – *Wisła* 18, 81); fever caused by fright could be lessened by drinking, always at noontide, hazelnuts – desiccated, ground and diluted in water (*Lud* 13, 217). The principle underlying such actions indicates the magic role of midday culmination, followed by the stage of the diminishing intensity of light and symptoms of illnesses. The time of full light (in both spring and summer) was also designated for collecting medicinal plants (Kolb 42, 313-14). Their therapeutic function consisted mainly in the irrational belief in the effectiveness of a plant charged with qualities of the Other World (illnesses came from the Other World, too – hence unity of the subject and the object of such interaction).

The magical enchanting of human fortunes was also manifest in the conviction that a baby's bathwater should be poured upon the most busy road at noontime – to make the baby likeable (*ZWAK* 14, 191, 27). "Black" magic, precluding happiness, too, could take place at midday: it was meant to retrieve evil, restore and reinforce the disturbed order of life indispensable for the proper functioning of social relations. The so-called *zawitka* – a set of seven rye spikes taken from a neighbor's field, tied with a red thread and placed downward – was supposed to be meaningful for a sacral addressee:

A woman holding a grudge against somebody, for example her neighbor (for having something stolen by her, etc.) decides to make a *zawitka* in the neighbor's field: she goes there at noonday, undresses completely, unplaits her hair, takes seven rye spikes, ties them with a red thread, holds them downward and says: "*Kruczi, kruczi na opaki sztoś nie było u N chleba ni muki*" [I wish my neighbor runs short of her supplies of bread and flour], or another ill wish – e.g. let her family fall ill, her cattle die, etc. Upon finding such a *zawitka* in her field, the neighbor despairs, as she senses approaching danger, though is unable to prevent it.

(*Wisła* 5, 500, 1)

The restoration of the protection of good sacral forces was possible exclusively on the assumption of innocence of the

suspect and on the accurate execution of an opposite magical scenario, reversing the undesirable situation:

If she is entirely guiltless, she may tear out the spikes, take them alone and at night to a cemetery, put them on some grave, and ill fortune would leave her. Doing this, she cannot look behind, lest the action becomes ineffective and must be performed again.

(*Wisła* 5, 500, II)

The hierophanic quality of the time of center, noonday, was most strongly expressed in a system of folk beliefs lying at the basis of numerous tales and *memorata* focussing on *poludnica*: the principal noontide demon, the solar field-spirit from the Other World – widespread in the folklore of all Slavic peoples.²⁸ Both her image and folk comprehension of the time of zenith amalgamated archaic mental structures and later ones, derived from Christian thought. The sacral system of Christianity, of the ethical principles of the Decalogue, dominated the former solar cult of full sunlight and warmth: both beneficial and destructive, impersonated as White God. According to A. N. Afanasjew,²⁹ his image was preserved in a White Russian tale about *Bielun*: an old man with a long white beard, dressed in white, who used to help reapers in their work. He most often appeared in rye fields carrying a beggar bag, full of money, on his nose.³⁰ He beckoned to some poor man and asked him to have his nose wiped: on fulfilment of this request money would fall out of the bag (golden coins indicated an archetypal association of sunlight with gold) and he would disappear. A prosperous man was said to have probably made friends with *Bielun*.³¹ Polish tales, *memorata* and *fabulata* about noontime deities reveal a peculiarly stratified fusion of beliefs and imagery: as a metaphorical representation of death (see her attributes: sharp sickle and scythe – *ZWAK* 2, 59); as a solar demon with features of angels – divine messengers from the Other World who guard social order and canonical norms relating to agricultural work; and, less frequently – as a solar punitive demon with diabolic characteristics, a manifestation of a widespread Christian system of beliefs in devils and witches, their earthly helpers (see for

example the motif of noontide devil – *Wisła* 8, 756; Kolb 34, 248; and Silesian female satans – Sim Gad 99, 115-16).

The didactic message of all tales about noonday ghosts enforced, through frightening the compliance with the norms of coexistence of This World with the Other World – the attitude typical of traditional mentality.³² The predicate of the terrifying impact of words, actions and images upon the human psyche emphasized the unusual, hierophanic nature of this time, perceived as the emanation of the power of *deus otiosus* (*tremendum*).³³ His features were assumed by the Polish noon-time diety – angel of death (sometimes impersonated as a rebellious angel, i.e. devil), as well as by the good divinity of crops. In folk imagination this most popular midday emissary from the Other World (from White God) was shaped as the principal guarantor of order in the stopped time of chaos, possessing characteristics appropriate for this role. Their analysis seems to lead to comprehension of the nature of temporality of the sun's zenith, expressed by a series of implications and parallels creating and uniting the rational and irrational spheres of daily activity, as well as convictions determining them.

The characteristics of the noontide demon are directly connected with attributes of the central deity; they form its hypostasis. The enormous size of the noontime deity (*poludnica*) was an important indication of her being a mythical creature from the Other World: she took the shape of either a gigantic female or a child, tightly wrapped in white linen³⁴ (*Wisła* 3, 480; 15, 503; 16, 623; *ZWAK* 2, 59; 9, 62; Zar Śtg 135). In contemporary folk records this deity appears as a white figure – not only female but also male (Sok Chopl 152), which may testify either to the decline of traditional, magico-religious consciousness, rationalization of beliefs,³⁵ or be a vestige of the field spirit *polewik*, common among Eastern Slavs, dressed in white and assuming the role of the host of fields, hostile to people. E. W. Pomierancewa proposes treating this creature as a male hypostasis of *poludnica*, the noontime divinity.³⁶ A text registered in the area of Olkusz near Kraków (in southern Poland) hyperbolizes by multiplication the superhuman size of her body: in former times

a woman was as well-built and strong as four women nowadays. At noontime one had to flee from a field not to get dominated by her power (*ZWAK* 11, 6).

In her multifarious variants, such a hyperbolized pretty female figure was equipped with marks of her solar origin: a golden crown (*Sim Gad* 131) and a golden belt (*Lor Kasz* 106). She was also imagined to make fire in the fields or elsewhere – but only on pretence – which obstructed harvesting at noontime (*ZWAK* 11, 5). However, in other tales she assumed the totally opposite shape of a hideous woman who appeared at midday and roamed in fields and forests in the company of dogs (*Lor Kasz* 106). Such duality of her image is noticeable even within one ethnographic region, for example in Wielkopolska (Great Poland) or Kaszuby (the region west of Gdańsk in northern Poland).³⁷ This ambiguous image constituted a model combination of features and actions illustrating and emphasizing the dual nature of the solar deity (*poludnica*): she was envisaged as either beautiful or ugly, either young or old, either elegant or repulsive. Such representations were particularly appropriate for her principal function to punish those (especially children) who broke the norms of coexistence in the stopped time. This kind of interaction produced an interesting amalgamation of the noontime female deity (*poludnica*) and a hag, a transformation of this mythical guardian of fields into a witch, frightening children.

There is an image of *poludnica* which directly indicates her association with a hag inhabiting a cottage standing on a hen's leg: a woman with hen's legs who appears and frightens people working at noontime (*Wisła* 15, 487). In the regions of Mazury and Kaszuby (in north-eastern and northern Poland respectively) she was called a rye female or mother and depicted as a monster with a frog's head, sparks falling from her eyes and long breasts slung over her shoulder with boiling pitch leaking from them. She was supposed to catch children entering rye fields, burn out their eyes and eat them (*Lor Kasz* 106). Many images of *poludnica* conforming to this stereotype derived from prohibiting children from entering the land under crop, lest they

would destroy it. According to S. W. Maksimow, the folk tale about the female noonday spirit was enriched here with a trait of naive peasant morality: the intention to terrify children, enforce their obedience during harvesting, which demanded total concentration of strength, as well as the fulfilment of some magico-ritualistic requirements.³⁸ The didactic impact of this image was effective mainly because it did not dispel a child's most intense fears, but on the contrary – reinforced them through the expected cruel outcome.³⁹ Such design of folk tales and beliefs in midday deities was exactly opposite to that of the magic fairy-tale which ordered the world by means of the happy ending, i.e. the triumph of the weaker.⁴⁰ Folk visions of the noontime, also those of later, Christian origin, linked the figure of a child (a mediating creature),⁴¹ placed in the realm of labor, with the predicate of kidnapping or a changeling – alien to pre-Christian (Slavic) noonday demons (see e.g. *Wisła* 8, 756; *MAAE* 9, 238), but peculiar to various kinds of evil female spirits.⁴² Their hostility towards children, as well as the other cultural aspects of the noontide discussed earlier, confirm its predominant characteristics consists in anticipation of theophany, but also in the greatest chaos,⁴³ the open gates of both Heaven and Hell, with the folk system of norms and regulations securing the magic protection of crops.

The symbolic essence of the time of zenith was displayed in the catalog of penalties inflicted and rewards bestowed by noontime demons, too. Wringing one's neck took a topmost position on this list – in both Polish and Slavic folklore.⁴⁴ The head appears to be the principal part of the body here. Already in the pre-Christian era the head was regarded as the concentration of vitality and of the crucial faculties which determine and direct human actions.⁴⁵ This was reflected for example in the following proverbs: one does not err when guided by his/her head (Nkp 1, 639, 26; *Wisła* 15, 212), the head is for a man what the legs are for a horse (*Wisła* 12, 312; Nkp 1, 643, 64), as well as the evening non-canonical prayers pointing to the necessity of its magic protection – see the expressions: “the cross at the head,” “the Virgin Mary at the head,” “Jesus Christ at the head,” etc. The

head has been also connected with solar symbolism (a head with long hair was sometimes viewed as an image of the sun and its rays⁴⁶). Such visions were reflected in the idea of solarized God, too: one of his icons – “His head is *as* the most fine gold” (S Sol 5, 11) – referred directly to the “golden convention,” peculiar to the folk conception of the world.⁴⁷ A penalty could be avoided by displaying an appropriate disposition of the mind, the accomplishment of a difficult task (see *Wisła* 3, 480; Lor Kasz 106). This figure, e.g. essential to the composition of fairy-tales, has been widespread in European culture since about the Xth century.⁴⁸ In the mythico-ritual scenario such tasks mirror the struggle of forces of Chaos and Cosmos: when applied to the time of the midday culmination they denote a symbolic duel of actions or words. Man is put by a noontide demon to this mundane test: passing it brings reward, whereas failure places one into the demon’s clutches (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 626). Such a difficult test may be sometimes an extreme or even absurd task.⁴⁹ In one of the manifold Silesian folktales about the noontime diety, she required the fulfilment of a mysterious wish demanding great bravery: to perforate with scythes a burning barrel flying in the air – when reapers were not courageous enough to achieve this, their town or village was swallowed by the earth (Sim Gad 132). This story exemplifies an absurd task, impossible to accomplish, the qualitative type of such impossibility. On the other hand, the quantitative type of impossibility may be illustrated by the following tale from the region of Kielce (in central Poland): a noonday spirit used to catch children and order them to cleanse their hair of vermin and eat them; insubordination was punished (ZWAK 9, 61-2). It was not the informative content but the ritualistic significance of such arduous assignments which was of primary importance.⁵⁰ This principle was particularly relevant to ingenuous questions-puzzles posed by demons (see T: 5085: white ladies’ riddles). They had the form of questions with perfidiously misleading suggestions: the right answers were always less obvious, seemingly unprofitable or less profitable. For instance, a midday deity asked a child caught in a field of corn or peas: what do you choose – a red ribbon or a barrel of

worms? And she killed the child if it was tempted to express preference for the ribbon (most probably by strangling, i.e. by actually leaving red sign – ribbon on the child's neck). If the second option was selected, the child was given corn for its parents (*ZWAK* 9, 62). The right choices attested wisdom (see the saying: to have a good head on one's shoulders – *Nkp* 1, 649, 132), as they seemed to be paradoxical, to negate common values, simple and easy predilections; like in the common proverb: not everything that glitters is gold. They compelled one to greatly appreciate unusual, enigmatic phenomena.⁵¹

Other variants of this puzzle applied analogous evaluative juxtapositions, for example:

Q: What do you prefer: a silver stick or a barrel of worms?

A: The barrel should be your choice because it contains bees, whereas the silver stick denotes a snake.

(*ZWAK* 1, 129, 30; also *Lud* 17, 95, 21)

Q: What do you prefer: a golden stick or a chip of wood in shit?

A: The chip of wood should be your choice as it is a piece of butter-cake, whereas the golden stick designates a reptile.

(*ZWAK* 1, 129, 30; also *Lud* 17, 95, 21)

The imagery used in these intricate, tricky questions constitutes the key to folk axiology of the time of center, culmination; it manifests two contradictory powers: solar and chthonic (the sun in conflict with snake – the light fighting with darkness⁵²). The same, though seemingly different code, is inherent for example in rhymes for children sleeping together in one bed: one who sleeps by the wall will eat a pot of cream, one who sleeps at the other side will eat crusts, and one who sleeps in the middle will eat cat shit (*Wisla* 17, 36; also *Nkp* 3, 276, 14). In the proverb variant of this saying the third component is replaced by honey, a solar symbol: one who sleeps in the middle will eat a cup of honey (*Wisla* 10, 850; also 468, 3; *Nkp* 3, 276, 14; in folk beliefs bees were regarded as sacred animals⁵³). Substitute images of these puzzles emphasized the ritualistic significance of the mythical contest, since the verbal duel taking place during culmination was focussed upon knowledge of the answer rather

than upon guessing it. It constituted a kind of riddle-trap: solving it guaranteed life, triumphing over the time of chaos. To assent to M. Kasjan's view:

In this particular situation, too, wise questions were a micro-repetition of the annual macrocycle, they tested sagacity (understood as a set of ideas and convictions closely connected with outlook and a definite hierarchy of values) rather than imagination. Such questions aimed not so much at identification of an object, but rather at evoking it from consciousness. At the same time, they required the questioned person to declare his/her own evaluative judgement.⁵⁴

The ritualistic sequence of a difficult question and its answer was a means of passing sacral knowledge. It pointed to the broad class of texts connected with the interchange of verbal gifts, essential to rituals of creation,⁵⁵ taking place in festive time, the time of chaos (see the etiquette of greeting at the outset of a new day). The process of guessing (opening the perspective) may be identified with the verbal creation of the world. It combined the sacred and the profane pragmatics of ambivalent questions (see ambivalence of *temps de passage*) where the allegorical nature of relationships within the Other World determined the allegorical form of puzzles. I. Kopernicki, a collector of Polish folk riddles in the XIXth century, rightly highlighted misdirection as their principal characteristic (*ZWAK* 1, 116). It reflected the pejorative aspect of contacts with noontime demons, associated them with destructive forces peculiar to liminal phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle (twilight, night).

The infernal, derived from Christian ontology, nature of such midday field-spirits consisted in instructions of defence, forming an integral part of beliefs and tales about them:

An easy way to protect yourself from a field-spirit is to cross yourself on seeing her from afar. She will immediately vanish and a cloud of wind and dust will appear for a moment in this place.
(*ZWAK* 9, 62)

Her power was lost also when the attacked child crossed itself and started to pray: she was fleeing along with dogs, gnashing

her teeth and causing sighs of wind (Święt Ln 472). For example, Lusatian folk records recommended a method of defence by telling her stories on any single subject until midday.⁵⁶ Supplication to God for help, evocation of his power, was another common remedy for impure ghosts (Pomier Mop 151). Paralyzing fear was replaced here with trust in Providence (a fundamental concept of folk religion) creating universal harmony. It was mirrored, in conjunction with a clear manifestation of solarism, in the following Silesian representation of this field-spirit:

A mysterious tall lady, dressed in white, appeared and made a circle around harvesters and ordered them to stay within it, as it was to thunder terribly and a huge animal was to come into sight. However, it would not enter the circle made by her and the people would remain safe. And so it happened: for about half an hour a fierce bull was roaring and howling around them. And suddenly there was silence. [...] They opened their eyes and did not see anything around.

(Zar Śtg 135)

The strongest emanation of the divine power at the time of zenith was associated in folk mentality with thunders, evidencing God's infinite power (Job 26, 14), preceding the emergence of the raging animal. *The Old Testament* pattern became embodied here in the pre-Christian image of a furious bull (taken probably from traditional homiletics), the male symbol of sun and fire.⁵⁷ From time immemorial it expressed the idea of cosmic and earthly fertility, eternally procreative nature,⁵⁸ of abundance, wealth and might. Associated with the noontime harvesting, it also came to symbolize overcoming the space of death and anticipation of the time of life (see the sequence: to reap – a reaper – death), a metaphor of creative capacity. Such nature of the midday cratophany in folk tales corresponded to the biblical image of the Revelation on Mount Sinai:

there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

And mount Si-'nâi was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

(Ex 19, 16-19)

In the images of the world turned upside down at noontime evoked here, the vegetational references concealed cosmic symbols of the contest of light and darkness (forestallment of the temporal vector directed to death). Folk imagination registered it with great precision and logic in tales and beliefs. They combined the times of midday (fading light, the turning point in the sun's diurnal journey) and nightfall (disappearance of the sun below the horizon and of light in the west; there was a dark kingdom of demons where sunrays were put out). On the anthropological level, the structural equivalence of the times of center and western temporal border, conformed to an analogous pattern:

zenith – suspension of work – dinner – nap (rest)

twilight – suspension of work – supper – sleep (rest).

Sleep and nap – though sharply distinguished in folk mentality, as mentioned above – were two personified forms of the re-creation of life, the children of Death, *Morana* (Kolb 31, 106). The noon time of chaos was the diurnal counterpart of the nocturnal time: both were filled by the same demons whose activity was dangerous for people (Zar Śtg 92; *Wisła* 8, 756).

Such figures appeared in records from various regions of Poland and were threatening especially to mediating creatures:

The shepherds who knew which birds hatched or tended their chicks, disclosed it to nobody – neither at noon nor in the evening. They also neither looked into their nests nor showed them to anybody, lest a field-spirit (in the shape of a magpie, a crow or an owl) ate the chicks or drank the eggs [...] or ants ate them.

(*ZWAK* 5, 158, 1; see also *MAAE* 7, 33)

The ornithological identification of midday demons is remarkable here: its construction follows the logic of primitive

associations with the birds presented as emissaries from the Other World. A magpie was connected with gold (see its partiality for spangles), whereas a crow (of the Corvidae, of devilish origin – *ZWAK* 5, 141) – with blackness. The above combination pointed to the clearly ambivalent status of field-spirit, whereas the owl (a nocturnal bird) was evaluated in an univocally pejorative way. The magic of looking during noon-time and sunset was joined with the dual nature of the heavenly fire: both life-giving and destructive. Hence the taboo of gazing at it in those phases of the day (see the imperative to close a dead person's eyes, lest he/she looks somebody out and takes him/her to the Other World), regarded by W. Tylkowa as a manifestation of respect for the sun.⁵⁹

The predominantly solar nature of noontide demons (they also did good) associated them with stars of dawn and twilight – mythical sisters of the sun: for example in exorcizing infant nocturnal cries in a field at sunset (*Wisła* 3, 511).

On the verbal stratum of the following complex magic act from the region of Rzeszów (in south-eastern Poland) the mediator assumes a concrete, individualized shape:

The field-spirit!
 The field-spirit!
 Take crying away from my child
 And convey it to the confines of the earth:
 Let them fly with the wind
 And never come back to my family!

(Kot Znp 189)

Manifestations of mental structures immanent in beliefs, tales and magico-ritualistic actions concerning noontime in connection with twilight reveal the multiplication of cults, characteristic of the traditional folk outlook. In relation to these temporal phases it is expressed in at least three complementary options: solarism, manism and Christian conception of sacral time. The oldest layers of these mental structures have been preserved largely owing to the parenetic function of simple stories woven round actions of noontide demons, which provided mythical

explanation of rational phenomena, especially of the consequences of remaining in the open air during the greatest intensity of sunlight. Such typical symptoms as strong headache, unbearable stinging neck-ache, muscle rigor, pain in the bones, were regarded as evidence of maltreatment by field-spirits (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 191). The time of center, of the sun's high culmination, charged with such meanings everything within its scope. Consciousness of its impact fluctuated, increased and decreased, in accordance with the rhythm of cosmic life determining the rhythm of human life and activity: after the happy conclusion of harvest, field-spirits ceased to be dangerous, became forgotten, to reappear the next year.⁶⁰ Theirs was the power of the sun and reborn nature: it was the greatest during summer, whereas in winter they fled from man and never appeared in the nocturnal time of non-being. This rule confirms life to be the fundamental principle of the folk model of the world, highlighting especially the vegetational aspect, the eternal rhythm of birth and death in nature. This idea was however reciprocal: work = life, but also life = work.

NOTES

¹ M. Eliade: *Images and Symbols. Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. P. Mairet, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 75.

² See A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda i wieszczaje słowo*, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Rossija, 1988, p. 139.

³ On the principle of translatability of temporality-spatiality see J. S. Wasilewski: *Podróże do piekieł. Rzecz o szamańskich misteriach*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1979, p. 148.

⁴ See A. Opolski: *Astronomiczne podstawy geografii*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964, p. 61.

⁵ L. Stomma: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 163.

⁶ R. Tomicki: "Religijność ludowa," in *Etnografia Polski. Przemiany kultury ludowej*, vol. 2, ed. M. Biernacka and others, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1981, p. 39.

⁷ See R. Vulcănescu: *Kolumna nebios*, trans. D. Bieńkowska, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1976, p. 39 and others.

⁸ L. Stomma: *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁹ See the story about mythical foundations of the solar cult in S. Czernik: *Trzy zorze dziewicze. Wśród zamawiań i zaklęć*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1968, p. 197; *Swaróg*, the solar divinity, was regarded in the Slavic Pantheon also as the god of fire. Brückner asserted his name derived from the word *swar*, connoting quarrel, anger. This "fire-quarreller" "wrangles" on the earth, devours everything around, and is irritated with those who break laws of nature; see A. Gieysztor: *Mitologia Słowian*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1985, p. 131 and others.

¹⁰ M. Abramowicz: "Formuły a rola gestu w komunikacji ustnej według M. Jousse'a," *Literatura Ludowa*, 1979, nos. 1/3, p. 43-51.

¹¹ Quoted after J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii*, Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1989, p. 319.

¹² See A. Zadrożyńska: *Homo faber – homo ludens. Etnologiczny szkic o pracy w kulturach tradycyjnej i współczesnej*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983, p. 107.

¹³ For example in beliefs of inhabitants of Perm a field-spirit's reversed dress was a direct signal of the world turned upside down – see W. M. Janowicz: "Piermiaki," *Żywaja Starina*, 1903, no. 1, p. 56.

¹⁴ See A. Zadrożyńska: *op. cit.*, p. 58 and others.

¹⁵ J. Adamowski: "Kulturowe funkcje miedzy," *Etnolingwistyka*, 1991, vol. 4, p. 65-82.

¹⁶ S. Poniatowski: *Treść wierzeń religijnych*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1965, p. 84.

¹⁷ See H. Czerwińska: "Czas świąteczny w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej," *Lud*, 1984, vol. 68, p. 71-87; also A. Zadrożyńska: "Czas pracy a czas święta," in A. Zadrożyńska: *Powtarzać czas początku*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Spółdzielcze, 1985, p. 137; Z. Poniatowski: "Czas religijny i czas świecki," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1964, no. 5, p. 51-9.

¹⁸ See B. Geremek: "Exemplum i przekaz kultury," in *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1978, p. 71.

¹⁹ S. Poniatowski: *op. cit.*, p. 88.

²⁰ See H. Czerwińska: *op. cit.*, p. 79.

²¹ M. Lurker: *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1989, p. 197.

²² The pair of heroes – a marvelous bird and a monk – was popular in exempla and verse narratives: see E. May: "Das mittelhochdeutsche Gedicht vom Mönche Felix," *Acta Germanica*, 1903 and C. Hernas's extensive commentary on records from the XVIIIth century "Piosneczki o komendantowej czórcze" (*W kalinowym lesie*, vol. 2 *Antologia polskiej pieśni ludowej ze zbiorów polskich XVIII w.*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1965, p. 231) based on the motif of paradisiacal enrapture, widespread in Slavic folklore since the XVIIth century, recorded in S. Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Bloomington-Helsinki: 1933, vol. 2, p. 306.

²³ See e.g. J. Karłowicz: "Tamten świat. Podania i bajki ludowe zebrane na Litwie," *ZWAK*, 1887, vol. 11, p. 243, no. 10; Z. Rokossowska: "Bajki (skazki) ze wsi Jurkowszczyzny, pow. Zwiąhelzkiego, gub. wołyńskiej," *MAAE*, 1897, vol. 2, p. 45, no. 18; R. Zawiliński: "Mit o Tantalu w powieściach ludu od Myślenic i Lidy," *Wisła* 1890, vol. 4, p. 340-3.

²⁴ See A. Zadrożyńska: *Powtarzać czas początku...*, p. 126.

²⁵ See observations by J. S. Wasilewski: *Tabu...*, p. 153-4.

²⁶ This idea, verbalized by W. Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*, is cited in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, ed. J. de Vries, ed. 3, Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1981, p. 343 as a distinctive component of the symbolic concept of midday.

²⁷ M. Abramowicz: *op. cit.*, p. 144.

²⁸ See other designations: *przepołudnica*, *południówka* in Polish (J. Bystron: *Zwyczaje żniwiarskie w Polsce*, Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1916; K. Moszyński: *Kultura ludowa Słowian*, part. 2, no. 1, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1967; K. Moszyński: *Atlas kultury ludowej w Polsce*, Kraków: 1934, map no. 7); *polednice* – in Czech and Slovak (L. Niederle: *Slovenske starozitnosti*, dil. 2, sv. 1, Praha: 1924; J. Polivka: "Du surnaturel dans le contes slovaques," *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 1922, no. 2, p. 118); *pripoldnica* – in Serbo-Lusatian (A. Černy: "Istoty mityczne Serbów łużyckich," *Wisła* 1895, vol. 9, p. 280); *poludnica* – in Slovenian (K. Moszyński: *op. cit.*, p. 697).

²⁹ A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda...*, p. 124-5.

³⁰ See for example the image of the field-spirit from the region of Kielce (in central Poland): her identification with a homeless beggar wanderer reveals her mediating nature of a link between This World and the Other World (*ZWAK* 9, 61); in Kolb 7, 252 she appears to loiter at noon as a covered woman.

³¹ On *Bielun* see also J. Máchal: "Slavic Mythology," in *The Mythology of all Races*, ed. L. H. Gray, G. F. Moore, vol. 3, *Celtic, Slavic*, Boston: Marshall Jones, 1918, p. 269.

³² See J. Ługowska: "Opowieści o strachach, strzygach i czarownicach jako przykład tekstów o intencji wzbudzania lęku," in J. Ługowska: *W świecie ludowych opowiadań. Teksty, gatunki, intencje narracyjne*, Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 1993, 125-45.

³³ See R. Otto: *Świętość. Elementy irracjonalne w pojęciu bóstwa i ich stosunek do elementów racjonalnych*, trans. B. Kupis, Introduction J. Keller, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1968, p. 99-100, 185-6 and others.

³⁴ From detailed investigations of the role of the color white in the folk perception of the world W. Propp derives the assertion that it is attributed to extramundane divinities (W. Propp: *Istoriczeskije korni wolszebnój skazki*, Leningrad: 1946, p. 158). The tendency to magnify bodies of field-spirits and other ghosts may be connected with moralizing exempla, in which even in the XVIIIth century intimidation constituted one of the most

popular educational methods – see M. Kazańczuk: *Historie dziwne i straszliwe. Jezuickie opowieści z czasów saskich*, Chotomów: Verba, 1991.

³⁵ On rationalization of magic see M. Buchowski: *Magia. Jej funkcje i struktura*, Poznań: Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza, 1986, p. 119-127.

³⁶ E. W. Pomierancewa: "Mieżetniczeskaja obszcznost' powierij i byli-czek o południce," in *Ślawianskij i bałkańskij folklor. Gieniezis, archaika, tradycyi*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1978, p. 47.

³⁷ See G. Węgrzyn: *Śląskie demony polne i leśne na tle ogólnopolskich wierzeń*, Opole 1977, manuscript in Department of Folkloristics University of Opole.

³⁸ S. W. Maksimow: *Nieczystaja, niewiedamaja i kriesnaja siła*, Sankt-Petersburg: 1904, p. 80.

³⁹ See R. Caillois: "Les spectres se midi dans la demonologie slave," *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 1937, no. 17, p. 88 – after E. W. Pomierancewa: *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁴⁰ See B. Bettelheim: *Cudowne i pożyteczne. O znaczeniach i wartościach baśni*, trans. and Introduction D. Danek, vol. 1, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985, p. 58 and others.

⁴¹ See E. Nowina-Sroczyńska: "Przezroczyście ramiona ojca (fragmenty etnologiczne)," *Łódzkie Studia Etnograficzne*, 1991, vol. 30, p. 125-37.

⁴² R. Caillois, too, claims (*op. cit.*, p. 92) that the motif of kidnapping children entered Slavic tales about field-spirits from an alien tradition. In these, *Roggen Mutter*, connected with fields, is able to increase or destroy yield: she plays with children or kidnaps them, especially those left on balks. See W. Mint-Wendhandt: "Erzählgut der Ruvischen Nehrung," in *Schriften des Volkskund – Archivs*, vol. 9, 1961 – after E. W. Pomierancewa: *op. cit.*, p. 157; see also Y. Ulrich: *Volksglauben aus Pommern und Rügen*, Stettin: 1886.

⁴³ See J. G. Gibbs: entry "Noon, noonday," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. G. Bromiley and others, vol. 3, Grand Rapids (Mich.): 1988, p. 550.

⁴⁴ See E. W. Pomierancewa: *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁴⁵ D. Forstner: *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. and ed. W. Zakrzewska and others, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990, p. 367.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁴⁷ On the so-called "golden convention" in Polish folklore see for example S. Czernik: *Stare złoto. O polskiej pieśni ludowej*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1962, p. 286-9.

⁴⁸ See J. Bolte, J. Polivka: *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, vol. 3, Leipzig: 1932, p. 366; see also M. Kasjan: *Polska zagadka ludowa*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1983, p. 100-6.

⁴⁹ See M. Kasjan: *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁵⁰ According to Afanasjew, a Lusatian field-spirit asks women how to

grow flax, and wrings their necks upon receiving unsatisfactory answers (A. N. Afanasjew: *Poeticzeskija wozzrienija sławian na prirodu*, vol. 3, Moskwa: K. Sołdatienkowa, 1869, p. 76-7).

⁵¹ See M. Kasjan: "Pytania o wartość," in M. Kasjan: *op. cit.*, p. 96-100.

⁵² See the chthonic-aquatic nature of snakes; in folk cosmogenesis the Devil is an aquatic creature: J. Tomicka and R. Tomicki: *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1975, p. 29; see also J. C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, p. 152.

⁵³ See J. S. Bystron: *Tematy, które mi odradzano. Pisma etnograficzne rozproszone*, ed. L. Stomma, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1980, p. 79-80.

⁵⁴ See M. Kasjan: *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵⁵ See A. K. Bajburin: "Zagadka," in *Narodnyje znanija. Folklor. Narodnoje iskusstwo*, ed. B. I. Putiłow, G. Strobach, vol. 4, Moskwa: Nauka, 1991, p. 42-3.

⁵⁶ See W. von Schulenberg: *Wendische Volkssagen und Gebräuche aus dem Spraewald*, Leipzig: 1880, p. 85-93.

⁵⁷ Among deities connected with the bull, *Agni*, the Vedic god of fire, played a significant role in sacrificial rituals. He was an intermediary between gods and people, his cult was mirrored in numerous hymns of RigVeda.

⁵⁸ See D. Forstner: *op. cit.*, p. 252; M. Lurker: *op. cit.*, p. 28-9; W. Kopaliński: *op. cit.*, p. 37-9.

⁵⁹ W. Tylkowa: "Wiedza ludowa", in *Etnografia Polski....*, p. 73.

⁶⁰ According to Eastern Slavic ethnographic-folkloric records, in winter field-spirits were sitting at air holes and jumped into water on seeing a human being – E. W. Pomierancewa: *op. cit.*, p. 148.

CHAPTER VII

BETWEEN FEAR AND HOPE (THE MIDNIGHT CULMINATION)

Climactic phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle (as well as of the annual cycle and of human life) are particularly sensitive sections of the temporal continuum (see also the foregoing discussion of midday). Rational and irrational experiences are amalgamated; the mythical struggle of creative divinities reaches its apogee then. Folk imagination articulated their characteristics especially in verbal and non-verbal forms relating to the so-called "midnight hour," the time of nadir. The nocturnal middle phase (unlike its diurnal counterpart) was primarily the sphere of activity of the Black God. This name derives from Slavic people's belief that this evil deity was responsible for human ill fortune (whereas the White God created good fortune).¹ According to folk beliefs, this Devil's rule terminated with the crowing of the first cock when he lost his freedom and was subordinated to the divine demiurge, like Lucifer chained to a pole (see T 803, T 2452). In the diurnal-nocturnal mini-cycle (as in the annual cycle) this mental pattern averted the vision of cosmic cataclysm, manifested harmony of the universe and predicted transition from Chaos to Order.² However, this passage took place beyond the sphere of human consciousness, as the time of sleep was equivalent to symbolic death, the depth of the night corresponded to the depth of the human mind, the outset and conclusion of the night were designed for watchfulness, and its middle period – for sleep (Kolb 17, 172). Human non-involvement in this process is indicated for instance by minimal tabooing of midnight (which is a period rather than a point of time – as well

as daybreak, nightfall and midday). The western border of light, the twilight, was the stage of night subjected to the strongest tabooing, which regulated man's coexistence with the surrounding world. Reinforcement of these prohibitions at midnight – the time of greatest activity of demonic creatures and evil forces (Nkp 2, 10, 49) – pertained especially to liminal objects, contaminated with death. For example, a woman lying in childbirth was not allowed to leave her house at midnight lest she was taken away by ghosts (*MAAE* 13, 59) – in this case the marginal state, the marginal time and the suprahuman space cumulated to increase the danger. The taboo of remaining in the open air applied to those tainted with sin, too, with didactic implications derived from religious exempla: "Neglecting prayers gets you into the power of nocturnal spirits. [...] If you go somewhere around midnight, they lead you astray (e.g. in brushwood or sod) and whisper: 'come here, this is the right way!'" (*MAAE* 7, 10, 1).

A simple religious interpretation, appealing to common people, regards sinners as deprived of Christ's seal, as particularly vulnerable to satanic temptations and to going off the correct course. They were excluded from protection by this phylactery, prayer-amulet, this sign of inclusion into the sphere of divine harmony.

Infringement of the taboo of work in stopped time, especially at midnight, created a dangerous situation, too – except for endeavors to get a magic means, for example a plant aphrodisiac, from flour ground in a windmill exactly at midnight (Kolb 42, 395). Many *memorata* assume the form of cautionary tales addressed to trespassers:

On Friday night a farm hand was carrying water from a river for a long time. On conclusion of this activity, around midnight, he noticed a colt which vigorously jumped and snorted in the river. He got terrified, dropped his watering can, and fled home. He claimed the colt was chasing him home and embodied a drowning demon.

(*Topielec w postaci żróbka* «A drowning demon impersonated as a colt» – *Lud* 10, 441, 40; *Topielec* «A drowning demon» – T 4060)

In the time of nocturnal rest and inertness, human activity was censurable, too:

A peasant was returning home from his mountain pasture at night and noticed a woman washing clothes. He rebuked her for failing to do it during the daytime. And she was a demoniacal being: she suddenly ran up to him, started to beat him with a wet rag and moistened his sheepskin.

(*MAAE* 7, 6, 14)

Tales of this kind enhanced the conception of the world turned upside down at night: populated by various kinds of female demons appearing at midnight in snow-white garments (see the foregoing comments on field-spirits), washing clothes. Therefore women made the sign of cross on their washing stone in a river, to prevent evil spirits from using it (*MAAE* 7, 6, 13).

This world comprised demoniacal and semi-demoniacal creatures, as well as para-demoniacal phenomena. The time of their activity was determined by predicates immanent in their nature – i.e. their characteristics pertaining to communicative orientation, various kinds of contacts, also with people. Harming, especially killing, belonged to such beings' fundamental predicates. They most often functioned as punishment for the violation of regulations governing communication with both demons and the local community, for remaining in the realm of activity of impure forces, for breaking prohibitions, etc.³ This principle is exemplified by didactic tales about contamination with death through appropriation of an object belonging to the Other World (contagious magic; see plots T 366 – A corpse claims his possession, T 470 – An offended corpse⁴):

Two spinners wagered that one of them would venture to visit a cemetery at midnight. She went there, found a corpse, took his hat and went back home. The corpse followed her and required that the hat should be returned, but she was afraid to do it. She requested a priest's assistance: he went at the head of a procession to the cemetery. When she finally gave the hat back to its owner, he snatched her to be swallowed up by the earth together.

(*Umarli wstają z grobu* «The dead rise from their graves» – *MAAE* 10, 125, 14)

Safe contacts of the living with the dead – both those who had and especially those who had not followed indispensable rites of passage – could take place exclusively upon compliance with definite ritualized forms of behavior. Their spatio-temporal aspect was expressed for example in the negative ritual applied to corpses of Jews and hanged Catholics, taken from the graveyard at midnight (*ZWAK* 3, 31, 78; Kolb 19, 213). Nightmares – liberated, appearing at midnight (Kolb 17, 94; 17, 99; 46, 480; *Wisła* 14, 400-41) – reinforced, through injuring, the idea of social order, axioms of both macro- and micro-communication, as illustrated by the following description:

Nightmares were regarded by common people as a peculiar species – almost exclusively female (succubi), occasionally male (incubi) – distinguished by their unique ability to separate their souls from their bodies at any moment at night. However, they do it only when offended by day: to take horrible revenge by strangling the offender. About midnight the nightmare is presumed to leave in a wheelbarrow: very slowly, as slowly as its walk is supposed to be (hence the proverb: to shuffle along like a nightmare). It comes to the front of the house, in which the unhappy victim of its anger is immersed in slumber. Then and there, its soul leaves the body to pass inside despite the closed door – even through a tiny aperture. It arrives at the bed of the offender to fulfil its terrible design. Then it spreads itself on the sleeper, puts its tongue into his mouth and strangles him. There are two ways of avoiding this kind of death: either to put one's legs at the head of the bed, or to sleep always on one's right side, as this is the good side. (Kolb 46, 477)

Such perspective comprised the projection of order of This World on the level of relationships between man and man, too:

One who is infuriated with somebody should get up at midnight, thrust three knives into three beams and the hated person would crawl to him on all fours and ask for forgiveness. He would not stand upright until the knives are removed from the beams. To exorcize these evil charms, the knives should be pulled out and the holes they had made should be sprinkled with sour milk.

(*ZWAK* 10, 114, 437)

The folk image of a just devil, who put to death at midnight seemingly good and honest people, contributed to the creation of

order in This World, as well. In the tale *O pustelniku i o czarcie* (On a hermit and a devil) he asserts to have been sent by God to punish those people on the earth whose conduct is not right (Kolb 3, 156). The figure of this demon, an impersonation of the folk sense of justice, most strongly imprinted in texts of folklore,⁵ manifests the assimilation and revaluation (simplification) of Slavic demoniacal beliefs (concerning both beneficial and malignant demons) by the Christian conception of the Devil. They are reduced to the principal binary opposition of the Divine and the devilish through identification of the Slavic evil demon (called *bies* or *czart*) with the Christian devil:⁶ he puts people to death, but in God's name.

The nocturnal central time, fully exposed to the Inferior Realm, comprised the chief concentration of power of impure forces (it grew with the increasing darkness of the night – Kolb 34, 136). This was due to translative, transmissive, partial and homoeopathic magic inherent in objects, actions, states and words. According to R. Cavendish,⁷

A link between the Devil and the north was deduced from the great text in Isaiah to which the Devil owes his name of Lucifer, where in proclaiming his intention to make himself like God the morning star, says "I will sit on the mountain of assembly in the far north! [...] [in] the passage in Jeremiah [...] God says, "Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land" ("Destroyers come from the north" 51, 51-2).

St. Augustine said: "Who is that north wind save him who said: I will set up my seat in the north, I will be like the Most High" (90, 22). Locative association of the north with the strongest emanation of evil, death and the Devil was characteristic of the XIXth century mentality and determined its temporal aspects. The phase of midnight is the dark side of things, the realm of shadows, which are inseparable from humanity, just like, according to C. G. Jung's theory, one's psychological shadow created by the sun – the light of consciousness, is an indispensable component of his self.

The nature of midnight is thus determined by the hierophany of Black God. In folk mentality it was mirrored primarily in

methods of transmission from man to Cosmos and from Cosmos to man. Whereas the first of these types of communication fills almost the entire temporal phase of midnight, the second constitutes its final caesura. Such interchange of ideas in the time of most intense night, strengthened sometimes with the magic of the full moon (the middle of the monthly cycle), of the greatest chaos, guaranteed complete success of all actions (positive or, more often, negative) decisive for human fortunes. This chaos was only ostensible: its immanent logic was created by reversed principles governing the universe (see the oppositions: right/left, odd/even, with positive semanticizing of the second element: odd = devilish – *ZWAK* 17, 294). “White” and “black” magic constituted omnipresent categories peculiar to the time of nadir (the Church considered them of equally devilish origin).⁸ Their various forms disclosed eternal human striving for happiness, which was represented in folk mentality as fullness, prosperity, but primarily as the harmonious coexistence of man with his community and Cosmos. This message was inherent in all ways of gaining the magic power effecting change, the creation of the new quality which was the foundation of the liminal temporality of the midnight phase. Such power (*orenda*) was released in complex magic acts: in Polish ethnographic-folkloric records they have been preserved as developed or reduced acts of transmission from man to Cosmos. They comprised the following ritualistic practices: invocation of a devil (evocative magic),⁹ dubbing a witch, acquisition of a magic means (e.g. plant or animal aphrodisiacs), forecasting.

The method of calling forth a devil turned out to be the simplest. Sometimes it sufficed to call out one’s name thrice at midnight in a forest (*Wisła* 17, 135), or to whistle at a crossroad (*ZWAK* 10, 114). On such a declaration of cooperation a devil suddenly appeared, willing to offer a great sum of money (*ZWAK* 10, 114; see the same predicate of *Bielun* at noontime). In many cultures making a noise after sunset was regarded as wicked;¹⁰ in Polish folk beliefs it was associated with the devil, the main source of sin. Therefore this action was tabooed, especially in the open air (*Nkp* 1, 773, 1).¹¹ Some invocations

required preparation, but the conclusion of all always took place at midnight, for example:

To see a devil one should catch a bat, cook it in a new pot, to be later covered with a new lid. The cooking water should be poured into a circle made with chalk. Then the bat should be taken at midnight to a crossroad, and a devil should be summoned until he appears.

(ZWAK 5, 151, 6)

The easy acquisition of supernatural power and goods was equivalent to selling one's soul to a devil. It was a gross transgression of faith in view of the centuries-long Christian tradition of anathema. The XIXth century ethnographic-folkloric sources both confirm this opinion and, simultaneously, manifest a different kind of consciousness, verbalized in the following saying: "Give a candle to God and a candle-end to a devil" (Nkp 1, 146, 35). They give evidence of the coexistence of two incompatible systems of belief, leading to a common practical objective (here the devil impersonated pagan cultic practices combated by the Church).

Complete communication with the Inferior Realm (the midnight as the deepest night, with the vector directed downward), combined with the acquisition of permanent magic power, is illustrated by methods of communication from man to Cosmos to the purpose of becoming a witch. This initiatory ritual points *expressis verbis* to the destructive role of the supreme king:

Each girl, married or divorced woman of easy virtue, or a drunkard, may be turned into a witch when old by the proto-devil Lucifer. To accomplish this she should be sunk in depravity. Then she must declare her will to Lucifer in writing and renounce God publicly, to a council of devils.

(ZWAK 14, 187)

Dubbing a witch discloses a dark side of the human soul (in the Christian sense): a desire to lead an easy life, to gain prosperity without great effort – which constitute, however, a natural human disposition to accomplish fullness. Entering the devils' community (selling one's soul to them) followed a ritualistic

scenario, in which magic sacralization was subordinated to desacralization. They created a new quality and personality, consisting of decidedly negative features:

To become a wizard (a witch) you should go on Good Friday, after twilight, to a Jew and enforce him to give you an old, worn out 10-cents coin. In his presence you should immediately put it under your tongue and go at midnight to a crossroad with a view of a cemetery. Then and there you should get a piece of stick (preferably hazel) and make a circle with it, leaving an opening on the side of the graveyard. Just before midnight you should enter this circle, face the cemetery and say: "O you, the greatest, the strongest sorcerer, the supreme king, make me your subordinate, and I will serve you faithfully."

Having said this, you should close the circle with the piece of stick and throw it far away behind you. Only God knows what happens then, but you should resist terror, close your eyes and stand until the crowing of the third cock. When you are struck on the back with a fist, you should say the following text without looking behind you:

"O you, the king above kings, the strong and malevolent wizard, I am your servant and will be following your orders; kill, murder me if I fail. Let this happen and let your name be great." Standing there you would hear vociferation, singing and music, but should not be frightened. When the hush follows, you should quietly go home and be silent about where you were, what you saw, did and heard. In the morning you should go to a shepherd-sorcerer (shepherdess-sorceress) and say:

Belege, melege, hoptus, poktus, zaj, czaj, name klaj – I am asking you humbly to teach me witchcraft. Upon having returned home, the 10-cents coin taken from the Jew should be tied under your left arm.
(*Wisła* 6, 785)

Such an open declaration to entrust one's body and soul to a devil guaranteed a new, favorable disposition (*ZWAK* 10, 110, 422).

As the apex of the desacralization of time occurs at midnight – the phase of greatest chaos – it is conducive to all actions reinforcing such utter confusion, creating anti-order. In social terms, it was manifest primarily in various methods of communication from man to Cosmos aiming at both harming others and the easy accomplishment of practical aims with the occasional infringement of principles of folk morality (the op-

positions: easy/difficult, inhuman/human; see intricate questions asked by field-spirits and arduous tasks posed in fairy-tales, with correct solutions rewarded in both cases). Such acts of transmission comprised mainly prescriptions for the creation of a magic means functioning as a devilish amulet. Temporal invisibility – a general characteristic of demoniacal beings in the entire traditional Slavic culture¹² – was a fundamental attribute enabling unavenged injuring (see the oppositions: visible/invisible, human/supernatural). Hence the usefulness of a black cat – a common representation of the devil,¹³ one of his hypostases¹⁴ – in acquiring it. This animal – born blind, to be later able to see at night – is associated with cleverness and resourcefulness (for instance, in Chinese the image of a cat corresponds almost exactly to the Polish stereotype of a fox,¹⁵ denoting viciousness, duplicity, predatoriness and cruelty):

To become invisible you should take a black cat to a crossroad and boil it there between 11 p.m. and midnight. Then take each of its bones into your mouth and look into a mirror to locate the one which will make you invisible for yourself and others.

(*MAAE* 10, 46, 18)

When placed in such a scenario, the taboo of looking into a mirror at midnight (lest a devil is discerned) changed its original significance (the world turned upside down). Under such circumstances, additional magico-religious safeguards (sacralized magic circles) were required:

At midnight at a crossroad you should make with consecrated chalk a circle about 42 feet in diameter and another one within it. You should stand inside, make a fire, boil water and throw a black cat into it to have it boiled promptly. Then you should take successively all its bones between the teeth and look into the mirror, until you identify the imperceptible one. This bone makes you invisible: enables you to steal or go anywhere unnoticed.

(*ZWAK* 10, 100, 275)

Vegetable means of transfer, as well as animal ones, served destructive practices. The source of power of all such magic

methods derived from peculiar properties of the time of nadir, liberating evil forces:

At midnight, some peasant women, called witches, pick from ponds a plant called *bonowie*. Then they dry and grind it and throw the powder into vodka. One who drinks it, acquires immense power: upon looking at a hateful neighbor and saying "Devil, sweep his troughs and injure him," all of his cattle die within twelve hours [...] When a witch intends to impair somebody's health, she takes oak leaves, dries and thrusts them into the walls of this person's house at a new moon, and utters the following incantation: "Let the entire house, the peasant and his children wither, as these leaves have withered."

(*Wisła* 3, 766)

Intended destruction by imitative associations (homoeopathic magic) determined both the magic action (drying as a metonymy of death) and its verbal expression (the time of impact of this power). Thus, modelling anti-world (harming) was performed by the Devil's allies, primarily those adopting his attributes. Their range comprised the majority of creatures: from human to superhuman, from simple village women who acquired secret knowledge but lived and died like ordinary people to superwomen whose human form was merely one of their impersonations. They were cold, deprived of emotions, and interfering in human matters in harmful ways. They assumed various shapes and usually at midnight started their mischief-making (*Wisła* 1, 61, 2). Reversal of the natural order in the time of their greatest activity was dramatized by folk imagination in plentiful tales about midnight sabbats, which were for example intended to bring hunger and a bad crop to people. They convened in a forest at a new moon, hid at midnight in old, rotten trees, sang plaintively and uttered incantations (*Wisła* 3, 765). Such fusion of verbal signs of the Other World (denoting forests, mountains) and verbal magic expressed the idea of chaos of the topsy-turvy world, belonging to a huge class of demons of darkness. However, the midnight magic comprised also identificatory-preventive practices (enabling identification and neutralization of threats), as well as constructive ones. Their manifestations, discernible in the external world, comprised

messages permeated with qualities of crisis temporality, including that of ambivalent liminality of the opening on the vertical line linking the Inferior Realm with the Superior Realm (see also the noon – *Wisła* 3, 505).

Such methods of communication of the Other World with This World balanced both sides of the opposition known/unknown (clear/unclear), and turned symbolic instructions into signs confirming this logic. It is conspicuous for example in samples of folk beliefs in *strzygoń*, a vampire which takes a human form:

Vampire (*strzygoń* or *strzyga*) is a man with two souls. After death, one of them leaves his body, whereas the other remains and animates it. Therefore he stays alive after death in the form of a vampire (*strzygoń*) – a child born with teeth, or even two rows of teeth.

He usually goes roaming till midnight. Some assert he transforms into pitch with the crowing of the first cock, whereas others claim he returns to his grave. Upon meeting a man, he tries to breathe into his mouth to deprive him of life.

In self-defence one should hit him on the face with the left hand. One may also flee to a plowed field and run there along ridges, as the vampire is not allowed to cross them. In this way he is kept harmless until midnight.

(*ZWAK* 11, 11-12; see also *MAAE* 7, 9-10)

A possibility of becoming invisible in the superhuman realm clearly indicated symbols functioning as amulets, too:

To become invisible to a ghost one should turn his cap inside out, put into it a piece of plowed soil, newly turned in spring, and put the cap on. He may wait and be on the watch until midnight to catch and punish the ghost upon its arrival.

(*MAAE* 13, 67, 10)

Vertical communication attributed to the time of midnight provided mediation between the Other World and This World: harmful and protective demons attracted omnipotent forces of evil and good respectively. As in the case of “black” magic the liberation of forces of good guaranteed the efficacy of positive practices leading to the accomplishment of a state of fullness.

Apart from the connotation of evil, most obvious and common in folk mentality (expressed in plentiful verbal messages), the time of deep night denoted also mystery, secrecy, potentiality and wisdom. It created an illusory opportunity of designing one's life, its various forms. According to folk belief, its shaping force belonged to the Other World:

At every midnight in graveyards the dead abandon their graves for a while and debate which of the living to take back with them. Their decision depends on their judgement of souls. However, frequently some souls outshout others and a healthy person may be selected.
(*Wisła* 15, 487)

Thus, the mystery of human fate was resolved in the fullness of time, between two consecutive days, in the middle of the Night, when dyadic communication (in both directions) was complete, too. Positive evaluation of this time was expressed in the tale *Jak utopiec Sewercio dał się oszukać* (How a drowned man *Sewercio* was cheated), which proves the period from midnight to one a. m. to be the happy hour (*ZWAK* 11, 17-19, 27; T 4060 – *Topielec* «A drowning demon»).

The midnight climax comprised the germ of absolute beginning, the potential of new life, when a new quality was to emerge from the chaos of night, darkness (Romans started their diurnal-nocturnal cycle at midnight and divided the night into three watches; at midnight the second watch terminated and the third one commenced, called the watch of the crowing cock¹⁶). This made meaningful positive magic practices relating to various stages and circumstances of human life:

“power,” conceived as the source of health, life, fertility, political influence, wealth...is located in the Other World and the purpose of religious performance is to provide a bridge, or channel of communication, through which the power of the gods may be made available to otherwise impotent men.¹⁷

Thus, magic methods determined universal values shaping human happiness, health and prosperity. In this context the following order intended to fashion a new life became meaning-

ful: at midnight to dig in puerperal impurities to secure a child's healthy growth (*Wisla* 18, 275). This was a sacrificial act for those deities who took care of pregnant women until childbirth, as well as of their neonates, whose lives they later fashioned.¹⁸

The opposition purity/impurity, combined with the mystery of life, implied the idea of universal harmony, as contamination with death (contagious magic) destroyed the order of life. This opposition, crucial for the midnight temporality, imparted metaphysical sense to other types of dyadic communication applying the vector of life, too. It was inherent in folk ways of transmission from man to Cosmos intended to acquire a magic means. This was always assured by exact application of a definite "grammar of communication," frequently fashioned by a magico-ritualistic act whose utilitarian significance was inherent in a complex sequence of signs characteristic of *temps de passage*. For example, a charm protecting girls against ulcers on hands, and particularly on the face, required the realization of the following scenario:

She should go at midnight with a stone pot to a place where three rivers join, and keep silent on her entire way. She should scoop water upstream and flee promptly, lest anybody meets her. Then she should wash in this water and say:

In the name of the Father and of the Son!
I know neither where this ulcer came from,
Nor where it will depart!

This water should be subsequently carried to a crossroad. And if the ascess still does not disappear, she should cross it three times with her forefinger and repeat the incantation.

(Kot Fso 103)

Water taken from a river at midnight at full moon (when it was supposed to cease flowing for a few minutes) constituted another kind of panacea (*MAAE* 1, 109). Stasis, immobilization of elemental force, became a metonymic sign of new potential for life. The symbolic re-actualization of cosmogony (emergence of the world from cosmic waters) made therapeutic actions effective (rebirth, re-creation).¹⁹

The midnight culmination of darkness was the appropriate

time for performing constructive magic practices. They comprised for example means of ensuring prosperity, money, abundant crop. Their shape, only slightly contaminated with religious content, determined the magical outlook. Agricultural magic became a particularly significant part of endeavors to safeguard cultivation and sufficient yield (human timeless dream). The active magic of good beginning served here as the foundation of further stages of work: the first sowing was made with great caution; many made it at midnight, undressed completely (*Wisła* 6, 771; *Hand Aber* 429). Nakedness – the state of Nature, birth, a signal of reversal of ordinary experiences – belonged to the common magic decorum which made the creative act effective through a sequence of associations provoking transmutation. This decorum appeared on the non-verbal level of complex acts of communication serving acquisition of wealth: a treasure was to be unearthed by 12 nude men at midnight, not looking behind them, despite all temptations (*Kolb* 10, 138-9).

Complete exposure to the Other World at midnight enabled to reveal one's lucky lottery ticket. The dyadic communication transformed a sender's expressive action into a signal awaited by a receiver, which triggered off further cause and effect nexes: "If an unclothed person comes to church at midnight and writes 90 numbers on its door, and five of them remain unerased on the next day – they will certainly be winning in his lottery" (*ZWAK* 15, 50, 73).

Examples of binary encoding intended to disclose a mystery, point to the concentration of ritualistic activity in a liminal sphere and in a central sphere with liminal properties of both This World and the Other World.

To win a prize in a lottery, i.e. to select 5 lucky numbers, one should go to a cemetery at midnight with holy water and an aspergillum. In front of the graveyard gate he must tread on the ground crawling with innumerable reptiles. However, he can safely do it, as they are rendered completely harmless by the holy water.

In any tomb in the middle of the cemetery he should dig a small hole and push a clean piece of paper inside. On his way back home he should refrain from glancing backward but sprinkle drops of holy water behind him, lest a devil wrings his neck.

All these precautions strictly obeyed, already on the following night the piece of paper with golden numbers inscribed may be taken out from the tomb.

(*MAAE* 11, 102, 32)

Discovery of the secret of such lucky lottery ticket was directly connected with divination – hence the application of its techniques in recommended ways for rapid enrichment: “Fetch a coffin board at midnight, set fire to it to boil numbers from 1 to 90 written on sheets of paper inserted in dough, until the boiling water throws out five numbers. They all win if you bet on them in a lottery” (*ZWAK* 15, 50, 83).

Plenitude, equivalent to full happiness, gained through individual magic practices, was not socially acceptable (as already mentioned): rapid acquisition of wealth was regarded as achieved at the cost of the degradation of one’s soul (*Nkp* 1, 22, 4). In Christian terms the easy accomplishment of an aim (for instance coming into the possession of money without work) was considered to result from a covenant with a devil, from devilish knowledge transmitted to witches.²⁰ It was generally believed that

witches receive their power from a devil who teaches them magic, ways of harming and of becoming rich easily. Therefore, in the area of Kalisz (in western Poland) sorceresses and shepherds visited the arch-devil on every Thursday at a new moon. They came to a willow and said the following incantation: *hokus, pokus*, devil turn up. Then he immediately appeared and instructed the summoners.

(*Wisła* 3, 765)

Such a pact might also result in obtaining *inkluz* (a magic coin),²¹ as illustrated by the following tale:

When a peasant found a silver coin, a devil embodied as a German showed up and desired to deprive him of it. The peasant managed to resist. They concluded a covenant: the man declared to be the devil’s friend for ever, who, in return, promised to transform the coin into his talisman. Whenever the peasant spent and changed this coin, at midnight it always returned to his pocket to be spent and changed again. Folk tellers claim that everybody who sells his/her soul to

a devil is paid with such a coin. It is called *inkluz*: a devil's property and impersonation. It serves its owner until the time of taking his soul by the devil (according to their covenant).

(Kolb 17, 107; see also 2, 252; 14, 150)

Many texts of folklore reveal various realizations of such a pact; it is frequent in comic tales (see for example the motif of the devil cheated in partitionment of a crop – T 1030), ultimately intended to control and overcome the opposition familiar/alien.²² On the other hand, these practical pieces of advice manifested socially desirable features: wisdom, thriftiness, cleverness. They created an illusion of reciprocal communication and strengthened the social and cosmic order indispensable to life.

The category of happiness constituted the basis of ritualistic constructive actions at midnight, as well as of ways of obtaining aphrodisiacs. This subordination precisely defines such communication by pointing to attributes of a common code: kindling the heavenly fire (proto-source of light) and the fire of love (by means of aphrodisiacs). The principle of homoeopathy determined also the means of transfer of the magic power: their metaphorical associations are conspicuous even in their naming, in notions connoting activity. Plant aphrodisiacs comprised primarily *nasieźrzal* (name implication: look at myself) *Ophioglossum vulgatum* Lin. (Kolb 15, 65) and *lubieniec* or *lubczyk* (name implication: love me) *Lingusticum levisticum*, and animal aphrodisiacs included principally bat bones in the shape of a little rake and fork. Their application has been widespread for a long time: for instance in a XVIIth century comedy entitled *Marancja* a female liar laughed at girls' naivety and gave them *Ophioglossum vulgatum* Lin. and a bat rake to attract or repel somebody.²³ An appropriate complex magic act verbalized the intention in an incantation-request formula:

A girl desiring a boy's love seeks and carries the herb called *nasieźrzal* (*Ophioglossum vulgatum* Lin.). She has to walk out backwards, entirely naked, at midnight, and pick it with the following magic formula uttered:

Nasizral.

I am picking you courageously
With my five fingers and palm
To make boys run after me.

(ZWAK 11, 36, 15)

Another formulaic variant of this complex magic act hyperbolized this wish according to folk comprehension of happiness as plenitude (Mosz KIS 2, 1, 334):

To attract a wooer a girl must seek at night the herb called *Nasieźrzal*. Having found it, she should undress completely, kneel and pick the plant saying:

Nasieźrzal

I am picking you courageously,
With my five fingers and palm
To make boys run after me:

Innkeepers

Shepherds

Village administrators

and all other young males in the village.

Having uttered this formula thrice, she must escape as quickly as possible not looking behind at the nightmares chasing her, lest she loses her life. She sews the picked plants up in an edge of her skirt. As a result of all these actions, crowds of boys get interested in her.

(Kolb 15, 65-6)

A variant of this incantation from the region of Kielce (in central Poland) assumes the form of a phylactery enlarged by direct indication of the divine mediator as the source of magic power, i.e. charming in God's Name (ZWAK 2, 258-9). On the other hand, identification (communication) with devilish forces and the direct transfer of attraction immanent in a magic drink are disclosed in amorous magic practices from the regions of Sieradz and Kraków (in central and southern Poland respectively):

A witch may sometimes use her might on somebody's request, mostly to excite love. She recommends such a girl to give a decoction from the herb called *lubieniec* [or *nasieźrzal* – Wisła 1, 101] to be drunk by the desired male. The herb had to be picked at midnight with the

uttering of the following incantation: "*Lubieniec*, I am picking you with my five fingers and palm to make boys crave for my affection."
(*Wisła* 3, 767)

The coincidence of the middle and beginning phases of night and week (of diurnal-nocturnal and weekly cycles) was supposed to guarantee success:²⁴

on the first Thursday of a new moon, exactly at midnight, naked girls must go backwards to fetch this herb [*nasieźrzał*]. When picking it they should utter the following incantation: "*Nasieźrał*, I am picking you with my five fingers and palm, // To make male adolescents run after me." Decoction from this herb, when drunk, melts the heart of even a most indifferent boy.

(*Wisła* 1, 101)

The nature of midnight culmination, its anticipation of and exposure to change, is also marked in ways of acquiring animal aphrodisiacs:

To get generally known love potions attracting or repulsing at will, i.e. a rake and fork of a bat skeleton, a girl should dig in a live bat in an anthill at midnight. Then she should flee as quickly as possible not looking behind, lest she becomes vulnerable to an evil ghost which frightens.

(*ZWAK* 11, 219)

Magic properties were transferred here from the object to the subject of magic action: the symbolism of a skeleton, a germ of a new form of life,²⁵ got fused with the motif of an anthill representing social order and plenitude.²⁶ An analogous complex of associations, highlighting the principles of contagious magic, is conspicuous in other examples of acquiring animal aphrodisiacs, too:

To attract a girl, a nude youth should carry a bat to an anthill at midnight. Three days later he must go there again, unclothed, at midnight, to fetch this bat home, and return without looking behind. Each girl touched with the legs of this bat will be under its spell for sure.

(*MAAE* 7, 15, 11; see also Kolb 19, 201)

According to Kolberg, such aphrodisiacs, stirring favor and love, are named in folk language *carowidelka* (the diminutive of charms – Kolb 19, 207). He emphasized them to belong to the same category of magic means as church objects used in various superstitious ways: gonfallon fringes, stoles, altar towels, pieces of candles (Kolb 19, 207). Thus, magic and religion were serving a common practical aim: charming good fortune. The change of status and restitution of new time were also inherent in ways of charming diseases, of restoring the order conditioning human existence:

To stop cattle pestilence, one should spin from early morning till midnight (i.e. till the crowing of the first cock). The cloth woven should be spread on a road for the cattle to tread. Then one should incense the cattle and their cowshed with it, until the cloth is completely burnt. And finally, its ash should be dug in at a crossroad.
(*Wisła* 17, 320, 430)

The time of these methods of communication from man to Cosmos was defined in terms of familiar oppositions: open/closed, clear/unclear, pure/impure. It was organized by the general concept of transformation which was heralded in the profane silence at midnight by the natural sound of the cock crowing, a sign of victory over the dark forces of destruction, announcing the creation of a new order based on the triumph of light (the first spring thunder was the harbinger of defeating the forces of darkness in the annual cycle).²⁷ In Eastern Slavic beliefs this contest was represented in terms of almost physical fight – of devils pommelling at midnight: the impure force started to struggle in dark clouds equivalent to the dark night to be struck by God, the lord of thunderbolts, with his fiery arrows. He finally triumphed and kindled the sunlight extinguished by evil demons (clouds).²⁸ The victory of light shut the Inferior Realm, like the slamming gates of a golden cave full of treasure (*Lud* 5, 130-1). This was the response to the message of the first voice in the darkness of amorphous, unstructured night – a signal of re-creation, rebirth.²⁹ Revival turned the cock, parabolically, into the representation of Resurrected Christ, leading

humanity from the realm of night to the realm of light, as the cock conducted it from nocturnal darkness to sunlight.³⁰ Thus, interspherical communication in the tripartite division of cosmic verticality assumed a new dimension:

Eden is inhabited by a cock with golden feathers. At midnight heaven opens, sparks fall, and the paradisiacal cock starts to crow. This wakes earthly cocks, strews their wings with sparks. They begin to shake them down and ask one another: "Have you been to Paradise?"

If such a cock lays an egg, an antichrist is hatched.

(*ZWAK* 7, 111, 14)

This mythical image of the creature annointed by God, with multiplied fertility potential (spark/fire – spark flame, the elemental force of fertility; cock – symbol of fertility) assumed a condensed form in riddles, which clearly articulated the vertical axis of communication among strata of the universe:

Hatched from a white stone,
Sent voice to heaven and to earth.

(Folf Pzl 61, 177)

Sends sounds
to heaven, and rays downward.

(Folf Pzl 250, 1110)

The exchange and qualitative transformation of sound signals into light ones terminated the cosmic struggle, constituted cratophany changing the nature of subsequent phenomena. In folk imagination the crowing of the first cock, attached to midnight, betokened transmission between This World and the Other World. It functioned as a clearly marked caesura: a topsy-turvy world in which people and hens sleep, whereas the dead and the living ride horses together (Kolb 14, 181). This interruption formed the most critical moment of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle: the crowing of the cock at midnight was supposed to unleash evil demons and trigger the temporary victory of their might (Kolb 5, 206; 17, 94 and 96). And after midnight they were rendered harmless (Kolb 34, 136). J. Gajek's

study *Kogut w wierzeniach ludowych* (Cock in folk beliefs – Lwów: 1934) pointed to the universal (not merely Slavic) scope of these convictions (Kolb 48, 267). People were held in the power of evil spirits only from sunset till the crowing of the first cock; if these demons stayed on earth afterwards they were turned into pitch (Kolb 48, 284).³¹ On losing their power, the spirits returned to their original state, natural shape and their abodes (*MAAE* 13, 66, 2-3).

All kinds of demoniacal and half-demoniacal beings concluded their activity with the cock crowing: they immediately left the world of the living to come back to their graves (Kolb 7, 64). Beliefs in malicious, harmful lamias who stayed in their tombs during the day and visited people's homes between twilight and the crowing of the first cock, to frighten, bite and injure them, were prevailing among Slavic folk.³² Souls of the dead visiting the living had to return to their places with the crowing of the first cock, too (*Wisła* 3, 514). Dwellings of repentant souls could be changed and their sufferings redeemed by a brave person gifted with magico-sacral power, who trusted that "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps 121, 8); "without Lord human endeavors are in vain" (Ps 126). Courage, cleverness and sacramental objects frequently helped to overcome a crisis and to cheat a wicked spirit, as in the tale *O żołnierzu, żonie jego i wójtowej* (On a soldier, his wife and the wife of a local chief officer – Kolb 3, 119-20). These dispositions were also reflected in prevention against evil ghosts and forces:

In Polesie [formerly in eastern Poland, at present in the borderland between Ukraine and Byelorussia], in order to obstruct a witch's access to one's cowshed, they sow poppy and nettles around, hang a candle blessed on Candlemas Day and put a harrow at the door. It would take a witch a whole night to collect the poppy and pull out the nettles and after the crowing of the first cock she is unable to injure domestic animals.

(*Wisła* 5, 497)

A candle blessed on Candlemas Day had purificatory properties acquired through the religious festive ritual of Purification

of the Holiest Virgin Mary. It belonged among common sacramental objects functioning as an anti-demonic bogy:

devils were a nuisance to animals, especially to horses and sheep; for example they frightened them and made them run about in their barn at night. To protect them a housewife should go to her scared sheep or horse before midnight with a lit candle, sit on the ground and cover the light with a pot turned upside down to prevent the devil from seeing its holy fire. When the sheep start to run about she uncovers the pot and the holy fire frightens the devil so much as to discourage him from returning here.

(*Wisła* 11, 403)

The apotropaic function of poppy was manifest in other circumstances, too:

If a dead person terrifies someone or if his/her ghost returns home to haunt, the closest relative should go with a gravedigger to the cemetery, find his/her grave, inspect it to find a hole or chink and fill it with poppy to terminate all frightening occurrences. To get out, the ghost would have to collect the grains of poppy, which would occupy him till midnight, i.e. till the crowing of the cocks, which is believed to deprive ghosts of their freedom.

(*Kolb* 19, 216)

A broom, too, functioned apotropaically: it was put on a threshold as a magic safeguard against nightmare to occupy her with counting the withes until the cock's crowing which rendered her harmless (*Hand Aber* 428).

The general belief in the nocturnal crowing of the cocks' ability to scare devils, to take away their power (*Nkp* 2, 252), in the solar and prophetic properties of this bird, was based on the original significance of the figure of a cock: already in antiquity it was consecrated to the solar deity Helios, its crowing averted the powers of darkness (see the testimony given by Philostratus in II century B.C.).³³ In this context the localization of places of exorcising sicknesses through forms of witch-doctoring preserved in Eastern Slavic folklore, became important: all illnesses and evil produced by wicked demons are supposed to go away to where cocks do not crow, where their voice is not heard – *na lunu*,

na bolota, na krutyi bereha, de piwni ne spiwajut, de piwniaczyj holos ne zachodyt (Jef Smz 61, 63, 78). A similar formula is comprised in the following Old-Croat magical verbal spell: *idete u mesta pusta, gdi ni oraci ne oru, ni pastiri ne pasu, ni zwoni ne zwone, ni petehi ne kantaju* (Zbor znž XXVIII, 87). Everything that brings misfortune should be consigned to a place where the cock does not crow (*Żyw Star* XI, 158; see the recipe for the creation of the magic pipe, able to summon ghosts, from a willow which never heard a cock's crowing – Kolb 17, 96). The opposition silence/noise, semanticizing space through the polysemic figure of a cock (designating also bellicosity), emphasized the significance of midnight temporality, in which the cosmic pattern of the struggle of mythical protagonists was unequivocally resolved. In folk imagination it took the form of information expressed verbally, for example in tales based on the schema of a wager laid between a peasant and a devil:

Once a devil wagered a peasant that he would accumulate material and build a castle on the summit of Babia Góra before midnight. And the man almost lost the bet when the devil needed to bring one more stone to accomplish his enterprise: when he was carrying it, a cock crowed at midnight to the man's luck. The infuriated devil threw this stone at the castle strongly enough to smash it. Having lost the bet he fled, and the ruins of the castle which stand on the peak of Babia Góra until today, bear witness to this event.

(ZWAK 5, 215, 2)

Folk cosmogony opposed the Devil's imperfect, defective creation to the harmony of the universe resulting from God's creation. This "prophet of white stone" announced his productive potential at midnight, as depicted in the following folk riddle:

A prophet was born from white stone,
He knows the hour, despite lacking a clock.

(MAAE 10, 319; see also Folf Pzl 145, 621)

Another riddle identifies the cock with Messiah – the executor of God's will, the savior, the solarized ruler – as well as with the

symbol of his might: the crown, the golden circle, the sunrays piercing darkness like arrows:

The Messiah was born from stone,
Scythes at his side, a crown on his head.

(Folf Pzl 142, 601)

This symbol was elucidated also through negation and direct association with the anatomical, physical and biological characteristics of the bird:

Not being a king, I wear a crown,
Not being a knight, I am protected by my spurs.

(Folf Pzl 103, 378)

The texts quoted above illustrate the intersection of realistic and metaphysical layers (typical of folk mentality) to create a uniform mythical image. Such metaphorical representation of the cock reveals the peculiar quality of the phase of midnight culmination, the multiplicity of its hidden meanings. They may be deciphered for example from antithetical lapidaries (divine/devilish)³⁴ or from the ideogram of stone (ruins) as a liminal sign of destruction with its immanent potential of future order:³⁵

In the castle of Wiśnicz balls and revelries were constantly held. To destroy it, a devil was carrying a huge stone from afar. But suddenly a cock crowed, the devil's hour passed and he had to forsake the stone. It has been lying ever since in the forest of Bukowiec [...]

(*MAAE* 7, 140, 38)

The cosmic semantics of stone as the augury of a new order was also connected with the symbolism of stone as a cultic, cosmic pillar supporting *Axis Mundi*, analogously to Egyptian obelisks expressing the solar cult. In Talmudic folklore, as well as in Greek, Arabic and Indian beliefs, this stone was regarded as the primordial substance for the creation of the world. According to one version of this myth God threw it into the sea, according to another – he screened the open abyss of waters of chaos with it, filling the space of entire universe with himself.³⁶

The complex figure of a cock – a symbolic representation of fire as a solar sign – was essential to the semantics of the time of nadir. It comprised another element of marginality, too: the equivalent acoustic signal of the sound of a bell, associated in a folk riddle with the cock (Folf Pzl 117, 466). This symbolic equivalence is based on a simple analogy: a cock's crowing turns a wicked spirit into pitch (Kolb 21, 191); to nullify a vampire's power, to change him into tar, one should reach a belfry and set its bell into motion (Kolb 21, 149). This associational complex displays a wide spectrum of functions of this solar bird, too: as a signal of diurnal temporality (of the beginning and end of phases of *dies naturalis*), as an apotropaic object warding off demons and neutralizing the consequences of their charms, the appellative and creative (fertility) functions, communication with a divinity, etc.³⁷ Pre-Christian mental patterns coincided here with the Christian system of meanings to strengthen the original symbolism. This context makes obvious the prophetic properties of this bird – gifted with the power of perceiving what is hidden, i.e. ghosts and death (Gaj Kwl 94). This bird's power of divination is combined with an unfailing sense of time (Folf Pzl 271, 1230; the cock's crowing foretells the change of time – Nkp 2, 99, 11). A new day began always after the triple repetition of the cock's crowing between midnight and daybreak, corresponding to enchanting light and life (in Polish folk dialects it was called *piejak* – ZWAK 2, 3; in Russian *piet'* – to sing, *pietuch* – a cock; these names emphasized the analogy between its singing and incantation). Triadic repetition of the signal, like the triple utterance of an incantation, opened earthly gates for the solar divinity. Hence its mysterious, unexpected voice between sunset and midnight was a sign of the world turned upside down: it foreboded death (MAAE 11, 70) or change of weather (ZWAK 2, 134). After midnight it functioned as a vector of life. Folk records highlight also the pragmatic function of the cock: an emblem of order and activity (Kolb 34, 166), the nocturnal clock – parallel to the diurnal clock of the sun:

cocks, used to natural order, cry at midnight: "A drunkard comes!" and others respond: "Catch him!" They know that one who loiters on

his way home at midnight is not a good farmer but an inebriate who returns from the village inn and deserves to be taught an explicit moral lesson imprinted on his back.

(Kolb 19, 204)

The phase of night constitutes ambivalence of centrality and liminality. It is the final link in the closed diurnal-nocturnal cycle, in the circle of time permanently returning to its proto-source – as creation started with the center.³⁸ Emphasis on its satanic nature, the change of its traditional moral semantics, resulted, however, from expansion of the Christian doctrine, which transformed the ambivalent time of the center into the univocal formation of evil. Verbal and non-verbal texts of folklore discussed here display magico-religious syncretism, clearly reflect these transformations and document both their direction and ethnic peculiarities.

NOTES

¹ Gieysztor asserts that the ethical and mythological dualism was absolutely not created by Christianity: it had appeared already in pre-Christian cosmological imagination: see A. Gieysztor: *Mitologia słowiańska*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1985, p. 81.

² According to folk vision, the end of the world will come when Satan breaks his fetters (see *Mit huc* 59-61). Therefore people dye and design Easter eggs to prevent Antichrist from gaining strength and liberating himself in this way (*Lud* 4, 219; also *Lud* 38, 275; T 2450 – Creation of the earth, variant no. 4). Thus, human actions following Easter rites preclude destruction of the world. According to R. Tomicki, developed eschatological-apocalyptic motifs, referring to both mythical history and rituals, have been preserved only in Eastern Carpathian folklore (in the region of Huculszczyzna) – see R. Tomicki: “Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny,” *Etnografia Polska*, 1976, no. 1, p. 66-8.

³ See L. I. Winogradowa, S. M. Tołstaja: “Matieriały k sravnitelnoj charakteristike ženskich mifologiczeskich piersonażej,” in *Materiały k VI międunarodnomu kongriessu po izuczeniju stran jugo-wostocznoj Jewropy. Problemy kultury*, Moskwa: 1989, p. 103.

⁴ Of frightening tales, warning against breach of ethical norms, see J. Ługowska: “Ludowa moralistyka a folklorowe formy narracyjne,” in J. Ługowska: *W świecie ludowych opowiadań. Teksty, gatunki, intencje narracyjne*, Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 1993, p. 105.

⁵ See L. J. Pełka: *Polska demonologia ludowa*, Warszawa: Iskry, 1987, p. 27.

⁶ See J. Gąsowski: "Demony," in *Mały słownik kultury dawnych Słowian*, ed. L. Leciejewicz, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990, p. 83. This "theological devil" frequently assumed the role of hangman, of the executor of God's verdict – as depicted in sermon exempla: see M. Kazańczuk: *Historie dziwne i straszliwe. Jezuickie opowieści z czasów saskich*, Chotomów: Verba, 1991.

⁷ R. Cavendish: *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1945, p. 93.

⁸ See S. E. Nikitina: "Žanr zagowora w narodnom predstavlenii," in *Etnolingwistika tieksta. Siemiotika małych form folkloru*, Moskwa: Nauka, 1988, p. 25.

⁹ See B. P. Levack: *Polowanie na czarownice w Europie wczesnonowożytnej*, trans. E. Rutkowski, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991, p. 20.

¹⁰ See e.g. J. M. Cooper: "Andaman – Semang – Acta Cultural Relations," *Primitive Man*, Washington, 1940, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 34 – quoted after Z. Poniatowski: *Treść wierzeń religijnych*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1965, p. 85.

¹¹ J. S. Wasilewski connects this interdiction with stasis bringing time to a standstill – the ultimate result of all prohibitions, see *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii*, Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1989, p. 172.

¹² See A. Gieysztor: *op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹³ See J. Anusiewicz: "Językowo-kulturowy obraz kota w polszczyźnie," *Etnolingwistyka*, 1990, vol. 3, p. 102-3, 105; also *Mify narodow mira*, vol. 2, ed. S. A. Tokariew, Moskwa: Sowietskaja Encykłopedija, 1982, p. 11.

¹⁴ In magic fairy-tales a devil frequently appears in the shape of a cat – see Kolb 7, 190.

¹⁵ J. Anusiewicz: *op. cit.*, p. 103.

¹⁶ See G. Jobses: *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols*, vols. 1-2. New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1961, p. 330. In Jewish culture, when time was regulated by the lunar calendar, a new diurnal-nocturnal cycle commenced in the evening, which was reflected in ritual traditions.

¹⁷ See E. Leach: "The Logic of Sacrifice," in E. Leach: *Culture and Communication, the Logic by which Symbols are Connected*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 82. Leach's book is the fundamental theoretical source of the model of cultural communication applied in this study.

¹⁸ See L. J. Pełka: *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁹ See M. Eliade: *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, trans. W. R. Trask, New York: Harper and Row, 1957, p. 81-2.

²⁰ See B. P. Levack: *op. cit.*, p. 44-8; also J. Collin de Plancy: *Słownik wiedzy tajemnej*, trans. and ed. M. Karpowicz, Introduction P. Kuncewicz,

Warszawa: POLCZEK Oficyna Wydawnicza Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża, 1993, p. 136-8.

²¹ On ways of both procuring and discarding it, expressed in Polish Tatra Highlanders' beliefs, see L. Kamiński (vel Kamiński): *O mieszkańcach gór tatrzańskich. Najdawniejsza monografia etnograficzna Podhala*, ed. J. Kolbuszewski, Kraków: Oficyna Podhalańska, 1992, p. 151-2.

²² See R. Sulima: *Słowo i etos. Szkice o kulturze*, Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy FA ZMW "Galicja," 1992, p. 208.

²³ See A. Brückner: "Przesady, zabobony, czary," in A. Brückner: *Dzieje kultury polskiej*, vol. 2, Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1930, p. 511 (repr. photo-offset: Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1991).

²⁴ On another kind of contagious magic protecting from headache – see Kolb, 19, 209-10.

²⁵ W. Kopaliński: *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990, p. 163.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

²⁷ See J. Tomicka, R. Tomicki: "Mit kosmogoniczny," in J. Tomicka, R. Tomicki: *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1975, p. 34-6.

²⁸ See A. N. Afanasjew: *Żywaja woda i wieszczęje słowo*, Moskwa: Sowetskaja Rossija, 1988, p. 137.

²⁹ See e.g. J. A. MacCulloch: "Light and darkness (primitive)," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, vol. 7, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, p. 47-51.

³⁰ See O. Keller: *Die Antike Tierwelt*, Leipzig: 1901 – quoted after J. Gajek: *Kogut w wierzeniach ludowych*, Lwów: 1934, p. 96.

³¹ The same source gives an analogous tale about the Serbian king Trojan who detested sunrays, and having once been entertained by his lover till the small hours, he got brightened by the sun and turned into dew – Kolb 48, 284; see K. W. Wójcicki: "Trojan, klechda serbska," in K. W. Wójcicki: *Klechdy, starożytnie podania i powieści ludu polskiego i Rusi*, Warszawa: 1837; see also the tale *Diabel – tanecznik* (the devil dancer) based on the pattern of victory of good, wisdom and modesty over evil, stupidity and greed – Kolb 21, 190-1.

³² P. Haining: *Leksykon duchów*, trans. T. Wyżyński, K. Zarzecki, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1990, p. 288.

³³ See W. Klinger: "Pierwotne znaczenie figury koguta," *Wisła*, 1904, vol. 18, p. 350-1.

³⁴ See e.g. M. Mazurkiewicz: "Kamień: dzieło Boga czy diabelska sprawka?," *Akcent*, 1986, no. 4, p. 52-3.

³⁵ See A. Aleksandrowicz: "Figura kamienia w kulturze polskiej przełomu XVIII i XIX wieku (Nieznana 'podróż' Izabeli Czartoryskiej)," *Prace Literackie*, 1991, vol. 31, p. 213-28.

³⁶ See I. G. Frank-Kamienieckij: "K kosmической семантике 'камня' и 'металла,'" *Sbornik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, XLV, Akademiku N. J.

Marru, Moskwa: 1935, p. 577; see also N. I. Korobka: "‘Kamień na morie’ i kamień Ałatir," *Żywaja Starina*, 1908, vol. 4; W. Wilinbachow: "Tajnaja ostrowa Bułna. Legiendy i fakty," *Nauka i Religija*, 1967, no. 9, p. 52-5.

³⁷ On properties of the bell and the cock see W. Kopaliński: *op. cit.*, p. 87-9; D. Forstner: *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. and ed. W. Zakrzewska and others, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990, p. 232-7; M. Lurker: *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1989, p. 85-6.

³⁸ On the symbolism of center see M. Eliade: *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. W. R. Trask, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1954, p. 16 and others; M. Eliade: *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, trans. W. R. Trask, New York: Harper and Row, 1957, p. 21 and others; M. Eliade: *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. R. Sheed, London: Sheed and Ward, 1958, p. 380 and others.

CHAPTER VIII

NATURAL MARKERS OF ORGANIZATION OF TIME AND THE FOLKLORIC VISION OF TEMPORAL ARTIFACTS

The segmentation and semanticizing of time into four principal stages of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, determined by alternation of light and darkness, constituted the essence of folk experience of temporality. Subordination to the rhythm of nature, adaptation of the rhythm of human activity to it, did not require precise time measurement. However, the folkloric clock was based not only on natural signs but also on the related rhythm of religious practices (*horae inaequales* – canonical hours), whose impact upon folk temporal mentality and time-reckoning was crucial.¹ Church bells, announcing intervals of uncertain or extraordinary time (prayer) regulated the entire life of a village community. By tolling successive canonical hours, they paved the way for more precise division of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, for rendering the passage of time in terms of hours. The atomization of time, splitting it into hours, quarters, minutes (Latin *minutus* means “miniature,” “small”) belonged to an alien cultural code – that of mechanical civilization. Clocks constituted its fetish and symbol: they separated time from human events, created an illusion about the existence of an independent world of mathematically measured and isolated sequences. Organic, cumulative time was contrary to the mechanical one.² Both coexisted in social practice, in everyday life: the time of church bells harmonized with the mechanical clock and the natural time reckoned from the observation of celestial bodies or the behavior of animals. This symbiosis is reflected for

example in defining the middle stage of the day according to the tolling of the noontide Angelus bell – see folk materials from the region of Kraków in southern Poland (*Wisła* 5, 633). And evidence from the area of Olkusz near Kraków presents the traditional shepherd clock:

to learn whether it is already the noon, a shepherd grasps both ends of his whip alternately with his right and left hand, saying:

A duck

A drake

Noon

Not evening.

If the final word coincides with seizing the end opposite to whipstock it is 12 o'clock, otherwise it is not yet.

(*ZWAK* 10, 253)

Such observation of the length of shadows and of the position of the sun in the sky supplied approximate temporal orientation. It also had magical significance: the number four connoted fullness, completeness, solar cultic images – echoed in the example quoted in the rhymed formula based on enumeration and contrast, in mythical-solar symbolism of the duck³ (see *Wisła* 4, 387). At night, natural temporal orientation resulted from observation of positions of the morning star and the evening star in the sky (for example the evening star lowers after midnight – *Gład Wiedz* 190; the morning star rises at 6 a. m. in winter – *Gład Wiedz* 133) and of the constellations of Virgo, Orion and the Big Dipper.⁴

Rough natural time orientation was reflected in the proverb “Stomach is the best clock” (*Nkp* 1, 207, 13), highlighting the adjustment of the physiological rhythm of people and animals to the natural rhythm: for instance the biggest meal of the day came at noon, fullness of time (see chapter VI). Kolberg maintained that

A peasant is not conversant with clock, does not have one at home. He reckons day-time by the position of the sun and by his wish to eat, and night-time – by the crowing of the cocks (the first, the second and the third) [...] and by the position of the morning star, Pleiades and Orion. In such practical terms he can excellently designate the time of daybreak.

(Kolb 46, 462-3)

Insensitivity to time, disregard of chronometric precision and conventional denotation of small time units – peculiar to folk mentality – were reflected for example in folk songs and tales recording beliefs. J. Jagiełło noticed that in folk ballads phases of the night and the motif of road functioned as a general indication of time, and not as its concrete measurement. Hence the phrasal clusters “at night at midnight at one a. m. / at two a. m. / at three a. m. / at four a. m. / at seven a. m., etc.” were conventional signs of a lover’s arrival.⁵ They also displayed a typical folk tendency towards periphrastic designation of time: as intensification of the depth of night, i.e. clear perception of the chronometric time as artifact. Its imprecise indication was caused also by awareness of its superhuman, mysterious, alien origin, which made it assume the abstract, mathematical segmentation of merely quantitative sequence, not diversified qualitatively (the night = stopped time). These temporal clusters could be connected with denotation of the nocturnal time in terms of the crowing of the cocks: its chronometric significance translated into hours was not the same everywhere. According to K. Moszyński, in some Slavic areas this was partly due to disregarding the midnight crowing of the cock (I), and commencing time-reckoning with the crowing of the second cock (II), as illustrated by the following table:

Great Russia	I midnight	II before daybreak	III daybreak
The region of Smoleńsk (in Great Russia)	I 2 a. m.	II 3 a. m.	III daybreak
Polesie rzezyckie (formerly in eastern Poland, now in the borderland between Ukraine and Byelorussia)	2-3 a. m.	II 3-5 a. m.	
Huculszczyzna (in East Carpathians)	I noon	II 2-3 a. m.	III before daybreak
Little Poland (south-eastern Poland)	I noon	II 1 a. m.	III about 3 a. m.
The region of Witebsk (in Great Russia)	I about 11 p.m.	II 1 a. m.	III about 3 a. m.
Dalmatia	I 2-3 a. m.	II 3-4 a. m.	III daybreak

In such cases, the qualitative significance of a temporal phase mattered, and not its quantitative, mathematical placement on the circle of time.

The characteristics of temporal artifacts are most conspicuous in conceptualization of the hour. This temporal unit was incorporated into the system of folk mentality by means of biblical patterns: both the actualizing ones from *The Old Testament* and those from *The New Testament* which primarily locate in time the events of the History of Salvation – Christ's hour⁶ (see for example Matt 26, 45; Mark 14, 41; Luke 22, 53; John 7, 30; 8, 20; 12, 23). According to St. John,

all Christ's actions are taken in view of the definite moment – the hour for which he arrived. He regards it as the time of fulfilment of his mission. It is of definitive importance: each moment in Christ's life is subordinated to this hour and day, understood with reference to them.⁷

According to *The Holy Bible*, "it is yet for a time appointed" (Dan 11, 35) constituted by the eschatological hour – the final time of absolute fullness, and the messianic hour of the Passion and the Resurrection, of completion of Christ's salvatory design.⁸ Folk mentality highlighted especially the eschatological dimension of this hour, directly connected with the imperative to fulfil the ultimate rite of passage: death is sure to come, but its day and hour are uncertain (Nkp 2, 456, 86; *Wisła* 15, 762). The biblical prototype of such sayings ("Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" – Matt 25, 13) explicitly preaches the essential necessity of being ready at every moment of one's life for one's final passage when the last hour comes (see the proverb in Nkp 1, 695, 16, and its biblical counterpart: "it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" – Mark 14, 41). Dynamic synecdochical expressions "the hour has come/comes/is coming" reflect the archaic system of designation of time based on the principle of *pars pro toto*. In Christianity it was defined by the idea of solarized God, in metonymical relation with the folk, anthropomorphized vision

of the sun traversing the sky. The face of a clock is a counterpart of the face of the sun, as demonstrated by an Old Polish clock: with every hour struck, it threw out a golden ball, to be later put back into its mechanism.⁹

Folkloric realization of the principle of *pars pro toto* (revealing lack of chronometric consciousness) is manifest in numerous texts of folk songs, and, especially, proverbs. Their verbal micro-structures comprise temporal micro-structures measured by various time scales, denoting various qualities, diversified quantitatively. Their materialization is determined not by the clock time measurement but by human activity, states, situations and values immanent in the two-dimensional global image of the world constructed upon the mythical opposition of light and darkness, good and evil. The folkloric notions of time and hour are equivalent, have the same attributes: hours do not recur but flow like water (Nkp 1, 694, 7). Under definite circumstances, hours, like time, may accelerate or decelerate, metaphorically (psychologically) grow shorter or longer:

- according to a moral qualifier: an hour spent with an evil man is like an age (Nkp 1, 381, 100); a whole day is enjoyable with a good man, whereas even an hour is unpleasant with an evil one (Nkp 1, 456, 73); one does not count hours in good company (Nkp 2, 111, 4);

- according to a situational qualifier: waiting decelerates hours, waiting-time is the longest (Nkp 1, 365, 18); for an ill and a waiting person an hour becomes a year or an era (Nkp 1, 694, 3); good weather, early hours and young age pass quickly (*Lud* 9, 368); an hour of happiness and a lifetime of distress (Nkp 3, 572, 5; Kolb 16, 152); one does not count hours for a drink and a girl (Nkp 3, 396, 1); an hour does not strike for a happy man, i.e. happy people do not reckon time (Nkp 3, 388, 5); every hour and every doctor shorten human life (implied mistrust of medicine and trust in folk-medicine – Kolb 60, 6).

According to the Christian conception of the world, God is the Lord of time, he rules human fate:

Oh! God, my only God,
 Shorten the hours of my life,
 Let me, miserable, not live any more,
 As I do not have a boy-friend.

(ZWAK 2, 83, 100)

The notion of hour frequently assumed a metaphorical-metonymical meaning, identified with a moment, a short period of time, close or insignificant: a guest notices more in an hour than a host in a year in the house (Nkp 1, 719, 74); he has got only one hour of life (Nkp 3, 459, 125); his hours are already numbered (Nkp 1, 694, 9); a hungry person is not interested in the actual hour (*Wisła* 15, 212). Conceiving the hour as a conventional temporal unit, abstract, equivalent to a moment, to the present, acquired proper meaning in view of the symbolic experience of time originating in the overall conception of the world (see foregoing argument).

The dichotomy of forces unfavorable and favorable for man gave birth to folk beliefs in evil and good hours:

Evil hours and minutes are extremely important in folk life. The infant or animal born or separated from its mother then is reared badly, withers or becomes invalid. The corn sowed, reaped or harvested then brings poor yield, makes sick both people and domestic animals which are fed on it. The animal, food or commodity bought then fails to be a profitable transaction and has to be sold quickly, lest it fades away or spoils. Evil hours and minutes are the period of power of sorcerers and sorceresses over people, domestic animals and objects. In such time bewitching eyes cause death, disability, illness or destruction to people, dumb creatures and corn. Wicked planets and stars approach to exert their sinister influence then.

Lucky hours are contrary to the unlucky ones. Therefore a peasant usually begins his work or sacrifice, saying: "O Lord, let me commence in a good hour!"

(Kolb 48, 279; see also *Wisła* 6, 161; *Lud* 22, 58)

The following record emphasizes such a start was of fundamental importance for human existence:

The happy or unhappy course and conclusion of each endeavor or action depends principally upon a good or evil hour of its beginning.

Our sources of pleasure and all good should be carefully protected from a glance of an evil eye, as even the sincerest friend may involuntarily destroy or bewitch everything with a fatal look.

(Kolb 40, 53)

The system of magic safeguards comprising formulae for charming the time of beginning (see chapter IV) is echoed in Polish ethnographic-folkloric records of clearly Christian origin.¹⁰ In the region of Kielce (in central Poland) peasants start working in their fields with the following words: Jesus Christ, send happiness in a lucky hour, the Trinity bless our actions (*ZWAK* 3, 6). The successful completion of any endeavor was a happy hour and originated in such magic safeguard (*ZWAK* 2, 98, 132). Curing was efficacious, bringing rebirth, if performed in a happy hour (a sickness was death's messenger – *MAAE* 8, 113). This time was created through the evocation of the biblical paradigm:

Happy was the day of Jesus's birth. Happy was the hour when the Virgin gave birth to her Son. I wish the hour of my exorcizing this erysipelas is equally happy: not by my might, but by the power and help of God, Our Lady and All Saints.

(*Wisła* 10, 705)

The principle of strengthening the impact of such complex magic acts through repeating the kernel phrase five times (see also the evocation of Jesus's five wounds) is illustrated by a Silesian exorcism, applying in its initial part the cosmogonic formula of creation in God's name.¹¹ Allusion to the Passion and the Resurrection increases the effectiveness of this magic: the time of Resurrection constituted the happy hour, the foundation of Christianity; it ensured the successful completion of such an act.

The conception of evil and good hours interestingly illuminates traditional morality and ethical principles, defined, too, by the time of beginning – the absolute and only determinant of all. For example, it was believed that if one was born in a certain hour everything was shaped according to his/her wishes, and those born in another special hour stole all their lives, even

contrary to their intentions (Kolb 33, 140, 5). According to Christian doctrine, deviations from norms (not evil!) originated not in one's disposition but were sent from outside, designed without one's will to be for ever, as one's constant feature. Thus, they were connected not with damnation but with man's unhappy fate, with unpleasant but natural ailment, which is impossible to eradicate but has to be borne, tolerated (Kolb 34, 161). This applied to other casts of the soul unfavorable for the environment, too, for example to evil and bewitching eyes – as evidenced by the following *memorate* from the beginning of the XIXth century from the area of Łosice (near Warszawa):

peasants had, however, an efficacious cure against him [the old man] – on having seen him, they uttered the following formula:

Salt, clod

With evil eyes!

And this protected them from his evil spells. According to his assurances, his glance at a tree in an unhappy hour would certainly wither it. But if the old man always remembers this formula and says it when looking at something, no harm would be made.

(Kolb 34, 145-6)

Under the influence of Christian ethics, the evil hour has also become a sign of condemnation of departures from norms regulating relationships within a community, especially those defined by the sacrament of Matrimony:

Unhappy was the hour,
When a wife was beating her husband.
She was hitting him on the head
And made him obedient.

(Kolb 18, 167, 296)

The peculiar logic of temporal determinism was manifest in other circumstances as well. It was a natural way to justify life failures:

Oh, it was an evil hour,
Oh, when we were born,
Oh, it was even worse,
Oh, when we were getting married.

Oh, we married neither for money,
 Oh, nor for love,
 Oh, our marriage originated,
 Oh, in curse and cry.

(Kolb 46, 217, 337)

It also provided an explanation of natural phenomena, for example in aetiological tales about the creation of the cuckoo – a girl which cuckooed in an evil hour changed into this bird (*ZWAK* 14, 206 – T 2522A *Kukulka* «A cuckoo») – or about man's transformation into raven (*MAAE* 11, 70, 84).

Pejorative semantics of the evil hour were synonymous with those of the black/dark hour (in accordance with the fundamental mythical opposition of darkness and light). The black hour denoted the adverse, critical time of man's everyday existence, hence the proverbs: To accumulate goods for a black hour (*Nkp* 1, 694, 13); His/her dark hour came (*Kolb* 8, 265); There is a black hour in everybody's life (*Wisla* 12, 313). "Piggish" was another epithet qualifying the hour: e.g. "piggish" hour possessed him/her (*Wisla* 9, 407), i.e. anger or lechery dominated him/her. This was an abnormal state, too, but was it socially censurable for destroying the established harmony? Wrath was a reaction to disturbed balance, and swearing – a verbal manifestation of this emotional state – aimed at restoration of the former order.¹² A curse was more effective when uttered in an evil hour (*Kolb* 7, 346), or rather in an evil minute:

Curses are in force only for minutes, because if they were longer, nobody would probably remain alive in this world. When laid in an appropriate minute, they cause immense sufferings. Even the most horrible ones used to perfectly come true in such moments.

(*Kolb* 33, 110, 6; examples – 29-32)

Invectives were addressed to supernatural forces. Those in more recent Polish folk texts were made, like complex magic acts of witch-doctoring, in God's name.¹³ On the other hand, in archaic structures preserved among Eastern Slavs, originating in pre-Christian times, the Black God, *Diw*, *Diwo* was the pagan harassing and castigating deity. People said: "*Sztob tebe czorny*

Boh ubil! [I wish you were killed by the Black God] – *sztoby na tebe czorna hodyna pryszła!* [I wish your black hour came] – *żeby na tebe czorny diw pryszol* [I wish your black god arrived]” (Kolb 33, 29).

The black hour was the counterpart of hell on earth: it emphasized prehistoric temporal semantics conveyed in terms of profit and loss. It was disclosed in events of human life determined not by the clock regularly striking hours, but in periods of time marked favorably or unfavorably:

Illness may be brought about by evil eyes, an evil wish, exasperation and hatred. There are such unhappy moments in the day in which each desire expressed irritatingly must come true. One will get harmed even when retracing the footprints of the cursing person.

(ZWAK 15, 275)

This leads to articulation of the most archaic characteristics of time in traditional culture, preserved in magical folklore: the time as plasmatic fluidity, fortunate and unfortunate, permanently ambivalent.¹⁴ This context makes clear the meaning of playful questions about time which do not really ask for time:

Q: What time is it?

A1: A spring has broken (Kolb 23, 217);

A2: It got off one and got on another (Nkp 1, 694, 11);

A3: A spring has broken and went to a market in Staniszyn (Nkp 1, 694, 11);

A4: Identical as yesterday at the same time (Nkp 1, 694, 11);

A5: The same as yesterday (Nkp 1, 694, 11);

A6: Fifteen minutes for a quarter (Nkp 1, 694, 11).

In terms of logic, the formulas of ritualistic communication evoked here indicate incoherent communication, non-existent dialogue. Like greeting and farewell formulae (see chapters IV and V), they reveal a system of encoding mental operations – peculiar to traditional culture, defined by L. Lévy-Bruhl as “alogical logic.” It primarily aimed not at informativeness (as its grammatical construction of interrogation would suggest) but at acceptability (active participation in discourse, community of goals),¹⁵ which consisted in designing and enchanting good

time, creating a safe temporal space for further discourse. These questions disclosed the intention towards the addressee, too: they constituted the opening formula (see A. van Gennep/E. Leach diagram), initiating man's overt, total, all-embracing dialogue with the cosmos and favorable and harmful forces. The answer was superficially jocose, but its deep structure referred to this total dialogue, to another kind of order: absurd, grotesque, as alien to peasants as the mechanism of clock measuring exact time, and the need to possess it. Questions about time constituted a form of etiquette, ritualized behavior: they formed a link in the great dialogue (projection of good time), emphasized the artifact nature of atomization of time. The mechanical time, alien to the human organism and its functions, assimilated to the natural temporal order only superficially, conventionally. The rhythm of social activity, as already noticed, determined the segmentation of time without the precise denotation of its units. Such was also the nature of common ways of measuring the passage of time, for example by the length of prayers (derived from the medieval monastic tradition):¹⁶

In colloquial speech, a prayer (i.e. a period of saying it) was a unit of calculation of time. A Ruthenian prayer was slightly longer because of their drawl and a greater number of syllables to pronounce. Similarly, a Ruthenian month (which terminated 12 days later) seemed to last longer than a Latin one. To designate a short while the phrase "in a moment" was used, and somewhat longer – "in two moments."

(Kolb 33, 110)

The term of burning a candle was another unit of time-reckoning widespread in Europe (e.g. used in lamp clocks in the XVIIIth century). It had been applied in ancient Egypt, Babylonia and China and was transmitted to European folklore through the Church.¹⁷ In folk songs it functioned as a device of calculating nocturnal time:

Three candles had been burnt,
until they agreed,
and the fourth was finishing to burn,
when they went to bed.

(Kolb 4, 32, 162)

The pragmatic sense was here dominated by the magico-religious function of candlelight (fire – see chapter II).

Temporal artifacts (an element of folk experience of time) emphasize sociocultural determinants of the folk diurnal-nocturnal cycle.¹⁸ Its segments did not exist objectively, beyond the sphere of human social activity. They constituted a frame comprising various interrelated temporal rhythms (events). Myths and rituals (dramatized, dialogic forms of myths) created a homogeneous system of co-ordinates of sociocultural time, made man's activity meaningful, ensured cosmic and human order (i.e. circulation of times), guaranteed life.

NOTES

¹ See B. Geremek: "Człowiek i czas: jedność kultury średniowiecznej," in *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X-XIII w.*, ed. J. Dowiat, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985, p. 447.

² See L. Mumford: *Technics and Civilization*, London: Routledge, 1934, p. 16 (the organic time is unidirectional: in the cycle of birth, growth, development, decay and death).

³ The image of the duck corresponds to the movement of the sun – especially to the phase when, according to folk imagination, it was "swimming" in a sea at night – see O. W. Kuroczkin: "Makosz – Małanka (do problemu rekonstrukcji mitologicznego i folklorowego obrazu)," in *Mistieństwo, folklor i etnografija słowjanskich narodów*, ed. O. K. Fedoruk, Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1993, p. 172.

⁴ On nocturnal star orientation see K. Moszyński: *Kultura ludowa Słowian*, vol. 2, part 1, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1967, p. 137-40; also e.g. Kolb 17, 71-2.

⁵ J. Jagiełło: "Czas świata balladowego," in J. Jagiełło: *Polska ballada ludowa*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1975, p. 107.

⁶ See *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 5, ed. L. Bienkowski and others, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1989, p. 1234.

⁷ H. V. Balthasar, in *Mysterium salutis*, vol. 6, 1971, p. 238-41 – quoted after G. Pàttaro: "Pojmowanie czasu w chrześcijaństwie," in *Czas w kulturze*, ed. and Introduction A. Zajaczkowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988, p. 303.

⁸ See *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. X. Leon-Dufour, trans. K. Romaniuk, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1990, p. 293-4.

⁹ Z. Gloger: *Encyklopedia staropolska ilustrowana*, Introduction J. Krzyżanowski, vol. 2, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1985, p. 197-8.

¹⁰ Topicality and popularity of such formulae among Eastern Slavs is evidenced for example by texts of charms, verbal amulets (*obieriegi*) and incantations, collected between 1978-1980 in the area of Vologda (in northern Russia) – see *Uczebnyje zadanija po kursu "Ustnoje narodnoje poetičeskoje tworczestwo" Tradicyonnaja kriestianskaja magija*, ed. S. B. Adoniewa, O. W. Owczynnikowa, Sankt-Petersburg: Sankt-Pietierburgskij Gosudarstwiennyj Uniwersitiet, 1992; see also W. I. Charitonowa: *Zagoworno-zaklinatielnaja poezija wostocznych sławian*, Lwow: Lwowski Gosudarstwiennyj Uniwersitiet, 1992.

¹¹ On magico-religious folklore of former generations of Silesians see D. Simonides: "Ludowa wizja świata," in *Kultura ludowa śląskiej ludności rodzimej*, ed. D. Simonides in co-operation with P. Kowalski, Wrocław: Volumen, 1991, p. 169-212.

¹² See A. Engelking: "Rytuał kljatwi u polskij narodnij kulturi" – a paper presented at the conference: "Metodologija kulturnogo processu: problemy mifologii, folkloristiki, literaturoznawstwa ta mowoznawstwa," Tiernopol: 1991.

¹³ See A. Engelking: "Kłątwa rodzicielska w kulturze ludowej," *Etnolingwistyka*, 1990, vol. 3, p. 21-35.

¹⁴ See M. O. Nowikowa: "Komientar," in *Ukrainski zamowlannja*, Kyiw: Widownictwo Chudożnoj Litieratury "Dnipro," 1993, p. 27.

¹⁵ See R. A. de Beaugrande, W. U. Dressler: "Intencjonalność i akceptabilność," in R. A. de Beaugrande, W. U. Dressler: *Wstęp do lingwistyki tekstu*, trans. A. Szwedek, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990, p. 152-85.

¹⁶ See W. Hough: "Time-keeping by Light and Fire," *The American Anthropologist*, 1893, vol. 7, p. 203; according to Le Goff, it was primarily the monastic community which established norms of segmentation of time – see J. Le Goff: "Od czasu średniowiecznego do czasu nowożytnego," in *Czas w kulturze...*, p. 367.

¹⁷ See W. Hough: *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹⁸ See A. P. Sorokin: "Sociocultural time," in A. P. Sorokin: *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time. A Study of Referential Principles of Sociology and Social Science*, New York: Russel and Russel, 1964, p. 158-225.

CONCLUSION

The consciousness of diurnal-nocturnal temporality outlined in the foregoing argument was reconstructed mainly from the XIXth and XXth century ethnographic-folkloric sources; it displays elements of the magico-religious outlook characteristic of this stage of development of folk culture. Its conception of the world, gods and people, as well as their intercommunication was defined by Christian philosophy, gnosiology and axiology, which dominated and essentially transformed the pre-Christian model. The nature of this change was determined principally by the idea of ethical dualism, the foundation of universal harmony: it situated human time (its active and passive aspects) within the ethically polarized Christian conceptual network. However, its conspicuous primitive, archaic layer created ambivalence and incongruity between pre-Christian and Christian visions. In the realm of day-night cycle it pertained mostly to negative evaluation of the nocturnal time. But this was contradicted for instance by magic practices, which were mainly good charms (warding off illness, exciting love, securing a good yield, etc.). Thus, the night could not be univocally an evil time. In archaic consciousness it was not the worse but the stronger side of the day/night opposition, it had immense cosmic power. The night was the most appropriate time for the re-creation of most significant pagan ritualistic texts and behaviors (see origin myths; the Ukrainian word *svit* means both "daybreak" and "world"). The night was not an evil time but the ambivalent time of peculiar magic: not only harmful but also favorable, as the falling darkness protected people, shut off evil (intrigues, hatred, wicked glances). Such folkloric-pagan conception of the night was clearly contrary to the Christian night based on the formula of opening, of liberating the elements and powers dangerous to

people. Christian interpretation of the time of charms became a feature of the ritual addressing of dark, impure forces within the realm of magic. In their archaic form these forces were not inherently impure: they were auspicious under circumstances of appropriate contact of This World (the living) in its cosmic dialogue with the Other World (the dead). The folk figure of the devil, either well-disposed or ill-disposed to people, preserved this archaic ambivalence.

In view of this archaic, equivocal nature of time (see also the symbolism of fire), the time of day, light, of daily human activity, had plasmatic structure, too. It has been preserved most clearly in the folklore of Eastern Slavs in a series of magical utterances assuming various shapes depending on circumstances: as forms of etiquette – in ordinary everyday existence; as texts-amulets (*obieriegi*) – in case of change of activity or state, or a magic act performed in a situation of conflict.¹ Public, generally-known magic safeguards against every possible danger were rooted in beliefs.² They revealed a fundamental principle of existence: man's awareness of rules of behavior appropriate to a definite configuration of space-time. Their absence, or rather weak articulation in Polish folkloric-ethnographic sources (except for the forms of etiquette of liminal phases of the diurnal-nocturnal cycle, discussed heretofore) proves both the effectiveness of processes of Christianization, replacement of traditional pagan formulae with prayers to God and Saints, and the peculiarity of the Polish folk outlook in the Slavic context. This also discloses a deficiency of the XIXth century ethnography underrating human individualized psychosocial expression within a definite framework (the necessity of individualized forms of magic safeguard against dangers). This tendency was fully realized especially in the realm of magic folklore (visions of a good day, as well as of longer periods of time) and appreciated only by contemporary collectors of folklore (e.g. F. Kotula).

Everyday temporal structures constitute invariables of cosmic organization, reveal mainly universals: a coherent image of the world constructed from organized complex systems. In this multi-level hierarchy, the vertical *imago mundi*, the man was

a mediator, a co-ordinating link.³ His permanent dialogue (both verbal and non-verbal, in tripartite communication with the other and the object) guaranteed and reinforced natural harmony, which he regarded as his superior and mainstay. The rules of such intercommunication (communication chain), based upon fundamental principles of dialogue and parallelism, were constant, like its aim – the archaic ideal of fullness of life. It turned all forms of psychosocial expression into struggle: not against the ethical “holy evil” but against the pragmatic “holy harm.”

NOTES

¹ See *Uczebnyje zadanija po kursu “Ustnoje narodnoje poetičeskoje tvorčestvo.” Tradicyonnaja kriestianskaja magija*, ed. S. B. Adoniewa, O. W. Owczynnikowa, Sankt-Petersburg: Sankt-Pietierburgskij Gosudarstwiennyj Uniwiersitiet, 1992, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ See E. Laszlo: *Systemowy obraz świata*, trans. U. Niklas, Introduction A. Siciński, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978, p. 99.

SOURCES AND THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

- | | |
|--------------|---|
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| Arch Charit | – Archives of W. I. Charitonowa, Wsierossijskij Nauczno-Issledowatielskij Centr Tradicyonnoj Narodnoj Miediciny, Moskwa |
| AUP | – Archives of Perm University |
| Bay Pow | – J. A. Bayger: <i>Powiat trembowelski</i> , Lwów: 1899 |
| Bieg Llp | – H. Biegeleisen: <i>Lecznictwo ludu polskiego</i> , Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1929 |
| Bieg Uk | – H. Biegeleisen: <i>U kolebki, przed oltarzem, nad mogiłą</i> , Lwów: Instytut Stauropigjański, 1929 |
| Bieg Wes | – H. Biegeleisen: <i>Wesele</i> , Lwów: Instytut Stauropigjański, 1928 |
| Charit Czibm | – W. Charitonowa: <i>Czornaja i bielaja magija sławian</i> , Moskwa: Interbuk, 1990 |
| Cisz O | – S. Ciszewski: <i>Ognisko. Studium etnologiczne</i> , Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1903 |
| Dob Smol | – W. N. Dobrowolskij: <i>Smolenskij etnograficzeskij sbornik</i> , cz. 1, Sankt-Petersburg: 1891 |
| Folf Pzl | – <i>Polskie zagadki ludowe</i> , ed. S. Folfasiński, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1975 |
| Folk GŚ | – <i>Folklor Górnego Śląska</i> , ed. D. Simonides, Katowice: "Śląsk," 1989 |
| Frank Zm | – E. Frankowski: "Zabiegi magiczne przy pożyczaniu, kupnie i sprzedaży u ludu polskiego," <i>Lud</i> , 1924, t. 23 |
| Gaj Kwl | – J. Gajek: "Kogut w wierzeniach ludowych," <i>Lud</i> , 1934, t. 33 |
| Glog bp | – Z. Gloger <i>badacz przeszłości ziemi ojczystej</i> , ed. J. Babicz, A. Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa, Warszawa: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1979 |
| Gład Wiedz | – M. Gładyszowa: <i>Wiedza ludowa o gwiazdach</i> , Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1960 |
| Hand Aber | – <i>Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens</i> , ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli, E. Hoffmann-Krayer, vol. 6, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987 |

- Jef Smz – P. S. Jefimienko: *Sbornik malorossijskich zaklinanij*, Moskwa: 1874
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- Kolb – O. Kolberg: *Dziela wszystkie [DWOK]*, Wrocław: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza – Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1961-
- Kolb 2 t. 2 Sandomierskie
- Kolb 3 t. 3 Kujawy cz. I
- Kolb 4 t. 4 Kujawy cz. II
- Kolb 5 t. 5 Krakowskie cz. I
- Kolb 6 t. 6 Krakowskie cz. II
- Kolb 7 t. 7 Krakowskie cz. III
- Kolb 8 t. 8 Krakowskie cz. IV
- Kolb 9 t. 9 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. I
- Kolb 10 t. 10 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. II
- Kolb 11 t. 11 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. III
- Kolb 12 t. 12 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. IV
- Kolb 13 t. 13 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. V
- Kolb 14 t. 14 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. VI
- Kolb 15 t. 15 Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie cz. VII
- Kolb 16 t. 16 Lubelskie cz. I
- Kolb 17 t. 17 Lubelskie cz. II
- Kolb 18 t. 18 Kieleckie cz. I
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The Holy Bible

The Old Testament:

- | | |
|-------|-------------------|
| Gen | – Genesis |
| Ex | – Exodus |
| Lev | – Leviticus |
| Deu | – Deuteronomy |
| Kings | – 1 Kings |
| Neh | – Nehemiah |
| Tb | – Tobit |
| Job | – Job |
| Ps | – Psalms |
| Eccl | – Ecclesiastes |
| S Sol | – Song of Solomon |
| Is | – Isaiah |
| Dan | – Daniel |

The New Testament:

- | | |
|-------|-----------------|
| Matt | – Matthew |
| Mark | – Mark |
| Luke | – Luke |
| J | – John |
| Acts | – The Acts |
| Rom | – Romans |
| 2 Cor | – 2 Corinthians |
| Col | – Colossians |
| Rev | – Revelation |

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